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CHINA.

BY

THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

A REVISED REPRINT OF ARTICLES FROM "TITAN:"

WITH PREFACE AND ADDITIONS.

EDINBURGH: JAMES HOGG.
LONDON: R. GROOMBRIDGE & SONS.

MDCCCLVII.

[1857]

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PRELIMINARY NOTE.

WHAT is the justifying purpose of this pamphlet at this moment? Its purpose is to diffuse amongst those of the middle classes, whose daily occupations leave them small leisure for direct personal inquiries, some sufficient materials for appreciating the *justice* of our British pretensions and attitude in our coming war with China. It is a question frequently raised amongst public journalists, whether we British are entitled to that exalted distinction which sometimes we claim for ourselves, and which sometimes is claimed on our behalf, by neutral observers, in the national practice of morality. There is no call in this place for so large a discussion; but, most undoubtedly, in one feature of so grand a distinction, in one reasonable presumption for inferring a profounder national conscientiousness, as diffused among the British people, stands upon record, in the pages

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and-corner assassins take upon themselves, not to force into entering Canton by an ignoble gate, but to exclude from it altogether, and for ever. Briefly, then, for this licensed scurrility, in the first place; and, in the second, for this foul indignity of a spiteful exclusion from a right four times secured by treaty, it is that the Chinese are facing the unhappy issues of war. And if any apologist for the Chinese, such as Mr Cobden, denies this view of the case, let him be challenged to *name* that Chinese object which has been here overlooked. Simply this one statement, if it cannot be contradicted, settles all questions as to the justice (on *our* side) of the coming war.

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PREFACE.

THE Chinese question is that which, at this moment [April 5, 1857], possesses the public mind, almost to the exclusion of all others, and is likely to do so for the next six months.*

* "*For the next six months:*"—Naturally the public anxiety cannot intermit or decay until the two capital interests are secured—first, of security for our countrymen threatened by a government universally *capable* of murder, even when not actively engaged in stimulating murder; secondly, of our indispensable commerce in tea. As regards the first point, let it be remembered—that in 1842 the present Emperor's father, with the approbation of his son, bestowed large rewards and titular honours upon a man who pleaded no other merit than that, in the island of Chusan, during our long occupation of it, he had, by poisoning the waters, caused the agonising death of a thousand British subjects—chiefly soldiers. The exaggeration of his success does not alter the character of his claim, or the *animus* of the Emperor and his council in recognising that claim as a ground for public distinction. Here—namely, on the point of personal security—lies, for the moment, our most pressing interest. On the other—namely, our commercial interest—I will say a word or two in the text. But, taking the two interests together, in less time than six months—allowing for the overland journey, voyage, &c., of the Supreme Commissioner, who has not yet left England; secondly, for the martial negotiation and adjustment of the dispute; thirdly, for the homeward despatch of the results—we cannot anticipate any secure settlement of the case.

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This paramount importance of the two-headed Chinese question is now speaking through organs that, in the most eminent sense, are *nationally* representative: China it is that has moulded, with a decision liable to no misinterpretation, the character of the new Parliament. Suddenly, summarily, without notice or warning, five leading members of the last Parliament, Messrs Cobden, Bright, Gibson, Miall, and Fox, all charmed against any ordinary assault by the strength of their personal claims, having not only great services to plead, but talents of the quality peculiarly fitted for senatorial duties, have been thrown out and rejected, with the force of a volcanic explosion, by distinguished electoral bodies, on the sole ground of their ruinous and unpatriotic votes with respect to China.

Not one of these gentlemen would seem to have at all expected his doom. And this strengthens the inference, which other indications favour, that they have not studied Chinese politics, or in any reasonable degree acquainted themselves with the Chinese character: blind to these main elements in the question, Messrs Cobden, &c., were unavoidably blind also to the value likely to be put upon those elements by constituents

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who were *not* blind. This ignorance about China manifests itself everywhere. In the Upper House of Parliament the most eminent statesmen, Lords Derby, Grey, Malmesbury, and others, betrayed inexcusable ignorance. Not that China is naturally entitled to any very large proportion of attention from our public men—the questions raised by China being generally too few and simple to require it—but in the agitation of a sudden crisis, throwing deep shadows of uncertainty over the immediate prospects of our far-distant brethren, and calling for strong measures on our part, most undoubtedly no man should have come forward to advise without earnest study of the case; much less to flatter with encouragement, from the bosom of our Senate, the infamous policy of our Cantonese enemies. Even profounder ignorance of everything Chinese is exhibited by Mr Roebuck. Would it have been credible, one month back, that an upright, high-minded, public servant like Mr Roebuck, sometimes giving way to an irritable temperament too much for his own dignity, but always under the control of just intentions, would, upon any possible temptation from partisanship, have allowed himself to speak in a complimentary tone of the ruffian,

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larcinous, poisoning Canton. Mr Roebuck, by way of describing and appraising this Chinese city, tells the manly and honourable people of Sheffield that it is very much like their own town; that its main characteristic is, to have a strong will of its own, and to be bold in expressing it. And he leaves it altogether doubtful whether the compliment, in this comparison of the two cities, is meant for Canton or for Sheffield. Sheffield, like many towns whose population is chiefly composed of ingenious and self-dependent artisans, I have long known and admired as a stubborn, headstrong, sometimes, perhaps, turbulent community, but always moving under the impulse of noble objects. The Sheffield that *I* have known never had its streets incrusted with layers of blood from unoffending foreigners, never offered bribes for wholesale murder, never gave occasion to its chief magistrate for alleging that, in tempting men to poison unknown strangers, he had simply yielded to the coercion of the town mob. Canton has risen on foundations laid by British money. As a city distinguished from its port, Canton was nothing until reared and cherished by English gold. And the vile population of the place, which has furnished a by-word of horror to all Euro-

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pean residents in the Chinese seas, has been fed and supported in every stage of its growth by our British demand for tea. The sorters, the packers, the porters, the boatmen, and multitudes beside in ministerial trades, live and flourish upon what virtually are English wages. And it is these English, above all other foreigners, but else in default of English *any* foreigners whatsoever, that the indigenous murderer of Canton cuts to pieces as often as he finds him alone in the lanes of Canton, or feebly accompanied. Such a roll-call of murders as pollutes the annals of Canton is not matched by any other city, ancient or modern. And yet Mr Roebuck assured Sheffield, from the hustings, that she was favourably distinguished among cities by her resemblance to Canton. And in the midst of all this, whilst ignoring the testimony of our able and experienced countrymen resident on the spot, and locally familiar with every foot of the ground, and with every popular rumour that blows, never once had Mr Roebuck the candour to acknowledge, for the arrest of judgment among his auditors, that every Frenchman, Belgian, American, and men of most other European nations, had abetted us, had joined us in warfare, when the circumstances had allowed (as

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the Americans,* for instance, though not with all the success that might have been expected); and finally, whether joining our arms or not (which, in fact, until equally insulted with ourselves, they could not do), all the official representatives of France—consul, superintendent, and naval officer—had subscribed the most cordial certificates of our intolerable provocations, of our forbearance in calling for reparation, and of our continued moderation in exacting that reparation when it could no longer be hoped for from the offenders. Is Mr Roebuck himself aware that the two great leaders of civilisation in Western Christendom have joined in justifying our conduct in the Canton waters? If he is, how came it that, in fair dealing, he did not mention this at Sheffield? If not aware of it, how came he to think himself qualified for discussing this Chinese question?

* The Americans did quite enough for committing themselves to the same policy as ourselves, but also (I fear) not enough to satisfy the claims of their national honour, as it is likely to be interpreted at Washington by Congress and by the President's Council. For, as is remarked, with an evanescent sneer, by a British naval officer, although battering to rags a goodly number of forts, &c., they compromised matters obscurely with Yeh, after failing to obtain those indemnities, and, above all, those guarantees, which they had originally proclaimed as their objects.

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It is but a trifle, after this flagrant body of misrepresentation, to cite the errors of Lord Dalkeith, when speaking from the county hustings in Edinburgh (Tuesday, March 31). It does honour to his conscientiousness that, whilst erroneously supposing the Arrow to be confessedly no British vessel, from the premature letter of Sir John Bowring to Consul Parkes, he gave his vote in that way which seemed best to mark his sense of what then appeared to be our British injustice; and it does honour to his candour that, on having since seen reason to distrust the impression which originally governed him, he now declares from the hustings that the case is doubtful. "I will not give my opinion," says the Earl, "as to whether we were right or wrong in the question of the lorcha: it was argued both ways by the most eminent lawyers in both Houses of Parliament." Yes; but being argued, with whatever legal skill, upon a false report of the facts, thus far the whole debate goes for nothing. But Lord Dalkeith adds a sentence (I quote from the "Scotsman's" report) which must have perplexed his hearers and readers: "It was argued," he says, "that, in dealing with a barbarous people like the Chinese—for, though they are a people learned

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in mathematics, and in some of the erudite sciences, they yet *are* a barbarous people—we ought," &c. As to the barbarism, nobody will contradict his lordship *there;* but as to the mathematics and erudite sciences, this is the first time they were ever heard of; and I cannot but suppose that the error may be owing to some equivocal phrases in the "Lettres Edifiantes," or other works of that early date. No native Chinese, educated at a native school, ever advanced, I have good reason for believing, to the Fourth Book of "Euclid." When the Roman Catholic Missionaries, about 1640, and especially the Jesuits, to whom all Europe is so much indebted for the diffusion of education, and above all of mathematics (for by Jesuits it was that the "Principia" of the heretic Newton were first popularised by a commentary), the Chinese were in too abject a state to calculate a lunar eclipse, and many times the astronomer-royal was bambooed in punishment of his miscalculations. But what did these horrid savages want with mathematics? It is perfectly impossible that any *insulated* love of speculative truth can ever arise. One mode of abstract truth leads into another, and collectively they flourish from *reciprocal* sup-

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port. Mathematics!—how could those men have, who had no navigation, no science of projectiles, no engineering, no land-surveying, no natural philosophy, nor any practical discipline that depends upon mathematics? To determine "*the fortunate hour*" * for any inaugural act, *that* was the ultimate object of "science" contemplated in China. Anything more than this was left to the Jesuits. In fact, a lively picture of the temporary light spread by the Jesuits might be drawn from the relations of Prospero to Caliban. The mighty wizard first taught the carnal dog to distinguish the greater and the lesser light, in fact, to understand the cause of day and night. But beyond a certain point he could not go—all teaching was thrown away upon one who could not be taught to *love* knowledge. Caliban, however, was at least made tractable to

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* It is asserted by philosophic travellers more than one, that not any great city throughout the greater part of the East is placed where naturally it ought to have been; and why? Simply out of deference to the sister folly of seeking fortunate *sites*. Good sense pointed out one site; but divination and magical tricks stepped in to prescribe some other. Even our ambassador in Persia has been stopped, sometimes at the gates of Teheran, &c., that his horse's feet might be timed into perfect coincidence with the suggestions of astrology.

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discipline—he understood the meaning of a kick. But the Chinese Caliban,

> "Abhorred slave,
> That any print of goodness would not take,"

was visited by successions of Prosperos, and persecuted them all whenever the casual caprice that protected them for the hour had burned itself out. Erroneous praise given to such vile burlesques of intellectual humanity forces a man to lodge his protest. Had the Chinese ever been inoculated with any true science, they would have learned to appreciate those who have more. Once let them, in any one pursuit, manifest a sense or a love of anything really intellectual, and we shall then have a hank over them—then first they will rise out of that monkey tribe, capable of mimicry, but of no original creative act, to which they now belong.

Impressed with this general want of knowledge as to China and its habits of feeling, which is due to mere want of study applied to that subject, I have allowed myself to suppose that it might be serviceable to abstract, and to make accessible for the mass of readers, the Parliamentary Blue Books, which are con-

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stantly filled with instructive details, but are seldom effectually *published* so as to reach readers not wealthy, nor having much time to seek after works lying out of the ordinary track. As one mode of doing this, I have here reprinted a paper of my own from TITAN, which embodies a good deal of circumstantial knowledge originally drawn, in great part, from Blue-books of several years back. To this I have prefixed what will be found a seasonable account of an angry dispute with China in the year 1848, drawn from the ample report made officially to Government. At a moment when the subject of China is sure to be universally discussed, no case can possibly present more instructive features; for it was conducted, from first to last, by a man of unrivalled energy and resolution, the Consul Rutherford Alcock; and it serves, in every stage, for a representative picture of the Chinese policy in dealing with foreigners. It has also this separate value, that it rehearses and anticipates, as in a mirror, the main features of our present dispute, some nine years younger, with Yeh and the "*literati*" (as we absurdly call the poisoning knaves) of Canton. Here we find the same insolent disposition to offer insults, the same extravagant obstinacy in re-

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fusing all real redress, and the same silly attempt to cheat us with a sham redress. Here, also, we find anticipated the late monstrous doctrine put forward in Parliament—namely, that no retaliatory measures must be undertaken by the delegated officers—consul or plenipotentiary—until the whole case has been submitted to the Home Government. On such extravagant terms, no outrage, however atrocious, could be redressed; the opportunity would have lapsed; the sense of injury would have faded away, and the sense of justice in the reprisals would be blunted, long before. Lord Dalkeith, indeed, most aristocratically suggests, that the disqualification of Sir J. Bowring for instant retaliation arose out of his station—he was not of *rank* sufficient to undertake hostilities. War demanded a baron at the least. If *that* were so, then government had been greatly to blame in not originally appointing a man of adequate rank to fill the situation. The public service suffers, danger is allowed to ripen, the reparable becomes irreparable, under such a doctrine as this. To what excess would our interests have been damaged in Burmah, in Scinde, in Affghanistan, and many other places, had such a doctrine operated! Let us hear, on

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this subject, two men of the most appropriate experience.

First, in 1848, on March 31, thus writes Consul Alcock on the supposed propriety of his seeking instructions from Hong-Kong (a thousand miles off) before he was at liberty to move:—"Too distant to refer for instructions, I have been compelled, without delay or hesitation, to do all that seemed possible with the means at my disposal. If fear of responsibility had deterred me, I conscientiously believe that, *long before your Excellency's better judgment could have been brought to bear upon the circumstances*, our position would have been materially deteriorated, and *our security would have been seriously endangered.*" And this, he adds, is the opinion also of all the foreigners, of the naval officer on the station, and all other men of any experience.

Secondly, on March 29, 1848, thus write the consular representatives of foreign powers, addressing our admirable British Consul, Mr Rutherford Alcock:—"Il est certain que si vous eussiez *tardé d'un seul jour* à exiger et obtenir la punition exemplaire des miserables qui s'etoient rendus coupables &c., la vie et les propriétés de tous les étrangers etoient serie-

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usement compromises." A single day's delay would, it seems, have been dangerous, *might* have been ruinous; and yet people would have life-and-death arrangements to wait for communication between Shanghai and London!

Shanghai, as is well known to those few persons who have made themselves acquainted with our Chinese Treaties, is one of the five ports laid open to our commercial shipping—that is, extorted from the terrors of China by our 10,000 expostulating bayonets; and next after Canton it is the most important. Here we British had, upon the whole, lived very much unmolested. For a thousand miles, laid between us and the murdering ruffians of Canton, had availed to cleanse the air from the reeking fumes of human shambles. Early, however, in the spring of 1848, six years after our drums and trumpets were heard no more, this happy calm was interrupted by a ferocious outrage, which is of the last importance for reasons of permanent *diplomatic* value. The reader must not understand that, in its immediate features of violence and wantonness, this case transcended many others in or near Canton: on the contrary, by an accident no life was lost on this occasion; whereas in Canton as many as six of our countrymen have been

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murdered outright in one and the same minute. But the Shanghai case moved regularly through all the stages of judicial inquest under the most resolute, vigilant, and prudent of public officers. The Consul at Shanghai, Mr Rutherford Alcock, fortunately for the interests of justice on this particular occasion—yet *that* was a trifle by comparison with the interests of our general position in China—followed up the criminal inquest, hunted back upon the traces of the ruffians with the energy of some Hebrew avenger of blood.

On Wednesday the 8th of March, 1848, three British missionaries—Medhurst, Lockhart, and Muirhead—made an excursion into the country from Shanghai, for the purpose of distributing Protestant tracts—a purpose quite unintelligible to the Celestial intellect. The furthest point of their journey was Tsing-poo, distant about ninety-six *le* [*i. e.*, according to the usual valuation, $\frac{96}{3}$ English miles].* The exact distance became a question of importance, since naturally it must everywhere be

* But Sir J. Davis, or else Mr Fortune it is, who remarks—that instead of counting a *le* as one-third of an English mile, more often it would be fair to regard it as a fourth, or sometimes even as a fifth of a mile. However, in this case, *thirty miles* is the Consul's own valuation.

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desirable for sustaining a complaint against wrongdoers — that the plaintiff should not himself be found trespassing upon any regulation of law. Now, the Treaty limited our journeys to a *day's* extent. But on this point there seems to be no room for demur, since the Consul (whose authority is here unimpeachable) exonerates the Missionaries from having at all exceeded the privileged distance. On leaving Tsing-poo, the Missionaries were hustled by a mob—not, perhaps, ill disposed in any serious extent, but rough and violent. Yet this moderation might be merely politic; for thus far the mob was under the eye of the town and its police. But, on leaving the town, another mob was seen coming after them—apparently, by its angry and menacing gestures, of a more dangerous character. Two of the missionaries, Medhurst and Lockhart, being able to converse fluently in Chinese, thought it best to expostulate with this mob; and, accordingly, to await their coming up. Any expression of courage was likely to do service, but in this case it failed.

It is not necessary to repeat minutely the circumstances of the outrage. The missionaries were knocked down, trampled on, robbed of their watches and all other personal effects,

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and then dragged back to Tsing-poo, with the avowed intention of either forcing them severally to pay a ransom of one thousand dollars, or else (which, on the whole, they preferred) of striking off their heads on reaching the other side of the city.

Who were these wretches, thus capable of meditating the last violence against a party of inoffensive strangers, that had come to Tsing-poo on a mission unintelligible, it is true, to *them*, but still wearing on its face a purpose of disinterested kindness? A few words will explain their position with regard to the Government, and the danger which attached to their enmity. The tributes of rice, sent to Peking by the southern provinces, had usually been conveyed to Peking by way of the grand canal. This method, as compared with the conveyance by sea, was costly, but had been forced upon the Government as the one sole resource in their hands for employing a turbulent body of junk-men. At this crisis, however, an extraordinary shallowness* affected

* The natural hydraulics of the river system in China threatens a vast section of this country with ruin; and the ruin is drawing nearer every year. One main cause lies in the constitution of the Yellow River (the second in rank among the Chinese rivers), which brings down continually vast bodies of mud, much of which is not carried out to sea, but forms constant layers of de-

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the grand canal, and the grain was put on board ships. The boatmen, amounting to 13,000, but by some accounts to 20,000, were thus thrown out of employ. How were they to live, or to support their families? The wicked Government (which Mr Roebuck treats as specially paternal) allowed them to understand that they must live at free quarters, as privileged marauders, upon the surrounding district; to which district they had accordingly become a terrific abomination.

On March 9, the day immediately following the outrage, the proper steps were taken for obtaining satisfaction by the Consul resident at Shanghai. A demand was instantly lodged with the Ta-oo-tae, or sheriff, for the arrest of the persons criminally implicated in the attack, for their trial, for their punishment, and for the restoration of the stolen property. Very soon it became evident that the Magistrate had not the remotest intention of attending to any one of these demands. "With a singular inaptitude," says the Consul, "he wasted time

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position, which have already raised the body of the water to such a height, that it is in a permanent condition of overflow, and at some seasons ruinously so. Shallows, on the other hand, arise in the artificial waters, from causes to which European science could apply remedies.

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so precious to *him* in mere subterfuges, and miserable attempts at trick and evasion. And the arrests, which were prevented at first only by his want of will, would soon pass out of his power." Once convinced that nothing was to be hoped for from the voluntary aid of the Ta-oo-tae, the Consul sat down to calculate his means of compulsion. These lay chiefly in such coercion or restraint as might be found applicable to a vast fleet of junks "on the eve of departure for Peking, and at that moment lying ready laden in the anchorage above H.M.S. Childers. Of these junks there were more than a thousand. Of all that vast number, not one," said the Consul, "shall pass the Childers," until satisfaction shall have been given as to the arrest of the Tsing-poo criminals.

This embargo had been maintained for several days, when the Ta-oo-tae attempted to intimidate the Consul by suborning two deputy officers to suggest the probability of an attack from a Shanghai mob. This suggestion was made by way of letter, and the men asked for a personal interview, at which they would have attempted to enforce their alarms more effectually. But the Consul contemptuously refused to see them. "I have," said he, "a

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wife and family living in the very centre of Shanghai: they and I am at your mercy; but *that* will not frighten me from my duty."

On March 12, the Consul writes to say—"That, up to yesterday evening, three days since the outrage had elapsed without result. All the parties implicated had been seen by hundreds, must be known to the policemen who assisted in the release of the British so cruelly maltreated; and, finally, that all the junk-men are in the employ of the Chinese Government. The Consul is bound to inform the Ta-oo-tae that, under these circumstances, any hesitation or any delay amounts to a denial of justice.

On the day following, namely, March 13, the Consul writes again:—"The ringleaders in the late murderous attack upon British subjects have not yet been seized. It is now, therefore, the Consul's duty to inform the Chief Magistrate, that between nation and nation, in all countries not thoroughly barbarous, it is a recognised law, when an injury is inflicted for which reparation is refused, the nation aggrieved may do *itself* justice, when justice cannot otherwise be obtained."—The Consul then shows, that for him the dilemma has arisen—either to see the highest interests

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of his nation sacrificed by the impunity granted to these criminals; or ——

And then he states distinctly the other horn of the dilemma in these following terms:—

"If, within forty-eight hours reckoned from noon of this present day, ten of the ringleaders are not in Shanghai for trial and punishment, the Consul will, in that case, take other steps to obtain that reparation which the honourable Ta-oo-tae must then be understood solemnly to have refused."

But was justice to linger through these forty-eight hours? By no means: provisional steps were to be taken instantly—namely, these two:—

First, "no duties for British ships can be paid over to the custom-house;"

Secondly, "nor can it be permitted that the grain junks now in the river shall leave the port; and I trust that you, the honourable Ta-oo-tae, may see the prudence of forbidding them to make the attempt."

The Consul then wisely reminds the Magistrate—*whose* doing it is virtually that these resolute measures are adopted: let *him*—let the dispenser of justice—cease to cherish murderers, and all will return to its natural channels. Indispensable is this continued moral

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memento; for else the knave would too surely forget that anybody was accountable for the pressure on the Chinese finances except Her Britannic Majesty's representative.

The Consul winds up by these two paragraphs, that must have carried with them the poison of scorpions:—

First, with regard to the evasion attempted of late more and more by the Chinese authorities, and which, with their usual silliness, they fancy to be a knockdown blow to the British, such as cannot be parried—namely, that they, the Chinese, find themselves in a mere inability to control their own mob, and that nobody can justly be summoned to the performance of impossibilities—the Consul simply requests the Ta-oo-tae to observe that in that case the Treaty lapses, and becomes so much waste paper. It had then, confessedly, been the crime of the Peking Government, in an earlier stage of the intercourse with Britain, to undertake that which, if *now* aware, then and always it must have been aware, of inability to perform. If this inability is not to be regarded as a sharper's trick, then the British re-enter upon those rights of self-indemnification which, upon mendacious pretences, they had consented to withdraw; and the Chinese

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re-enter upon those evils from which, under a fraudulent representation, we consented to deliver them. Nothing was exacted from Peking, except the withdrawal of patronage from murder.

The closing paragraph, ominous in Chinese ears as the bell of St Sepulchre in past times to the poor Newgate convict, ran thus:—"I entreat you, whilst it is yet time, to put an end to this untoward state of affairs BY PRODUCING THE CRIMINALS:" [there lay the sum of our demand:] "but, if this be not done, it remains for me to announce my determination to redress the injury inflicted." The Consul then announces the arrival of H.M.S. Childers, and the immediate approach of her comrade, the Espiégle.

"And should further insult, molestation, or injury be offered to British subjects, I will summon every British ship within reach to the anchorage; and the consequences will rest on your Excellency's head, whose acts will have been the cause of all that may follow."

Let us pause a moment to review the case so far as it has even yet travelled. I have noticed in another part of this pamphlet the

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inhuman obstinacy of the Chinese, quite unparalleled in human annals, agreeably to which experience it is a common remark of Europeans in China, that no good ever comes of reasoning with a Chinaman; for what he says at first, though by mere accident, *that* he fancies it a point of nobility to insist on at the last. But at what price? Let this be judged by the present case. This dog, now playing his antics before us in a style to make the angels weep, is pretending to think it a meritorious distinction in his public history, that he has screened, and will continue to screen, from justice a gang of bloody criminals. Why? On what allegation? Allow him even the benefit of what is essential to the comfort of a Chinese—namely, falsehood—upon what mendacious pretence does he build his patronage of these thieves? Is it that he takes some separate and eccentric view of their murderous acts? Is it as a hair-splitting casuist that he comes forward? Not at all: he admits the very worst of what is alleged against them by ourselves. Is it then simply that he shrinks from the *trouble* that may chance to be connected with the arrest of the accused? But as yet he has not made an attempt to arrest them; and already, even at this early stage of

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the case, it has become evident enough that trouble incalculably greater will attend the refusal to arrest. Is it then that he has been bribed by, or on behalf of, the wrong-doers? Neither case is possible: there is nobody who takes any interest in the ruffians; and they, individually, are paupers. The sole reason which governs the Ta-oo-tae, is derived from the impulse of demoniac obstinacy. From the first he had sworn to himself—that the Consul should not obtain his demand. And, in fact, it will *not* be obtained through this officer, though it is daily becoming clearer that it will be obtained in spite of this officer, to the signal injury of this officer, and (unless he should have the fiend's luck as well as his own), probably, to his ruin. Yet all this plain summons of common sense is overthrown by the single impulse of Chinese currish restiveness.

Considered as a morbid phenomenon in the history of human nature, the case [*i. e.*, not the individual case, but the Chinese case generally] is interesting; and it is worth while arraying before the reader that series of mortifications which had *already* followed out of the Ta-oo-taed obstinacy, and was likely every week to thicken its gloomy shadows:—

First, he had been baffled—and, which was

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still more mortifying, he had been *exposed* as a baffled agent—in a little intrigue for undermining the official rights and dignity of the Consul—Rutherford Alcock. The Ta-oo-tae had written privately to Mr Medhurst, with a view to some secret hole-and-corner settlement of the case, such as might evade the call for the criminals, and supersede, as a *res judicata*, the official interference of the Consul. With summary decision, the Consul showed him that his manœuvres were known to him, and were too frivolous (as being founded in total ignorance of international diplomacy) to cause him any serious concern.

Secondly, he had hoped that this refusal of the Tsing-poo delinquents would operate most prejudicially to the British interests, in so far as they depended upon public opinion. And this result really *would* have followed, but for the powerful counteraction effected by the Consul. He was fully aware of the intense interest in this affair taken by the whole population between Shanghai and Tsing-poo. The Chinese in this province, previously perplexed in extremity by the counter indications of British character, had been impressed profoundly by reports to the disadvantage of our power and credit from Canton; they were

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generally in a state of suspense upon the true tendencies of our influence and weight with the supreme government; and this contest with the local government, tending (as apparently it did) to an open rupture, was naturally watched by the whole population over an area* of a thousand square miles (*i. e.*, over all the interjacent country connecting Shanghai and Tsing-poo, and round each of these neighbouring cities as a centre). But this vigilant interest was trained into currents favourable to the British name by placards (in the Chinese language for the native population, in the English language for the European population), emanating from the judicious pen of the Consul. These placards were, in one special feature, most skilfully framed—that so far from arrogantly or ostentatiously arraying before their readers the vast British resources, on the contrary, they sought to apologise for the painful necessity of employing them. Nevertheless, in the very act of thus apologising, unavoidably they rehearsed and marshalled those terrors which they de-

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* "*Area:*"—Not of a thousand miles square, which else the reader might be predisposed to think from the vast extent of China, but of a thousand square miles.

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precated. How painful to summon this eighty-four-gun ship! How disagreeable to call up that dreadful Nemesis steamer, which revives so many angry memorials! Yet *in deprecating he records them.*

It was not that the Consul really felt the confidence, or not *all* the confidence, which patriotically he simulated. But he knew that it would be ruinous to *manifest* any fears; upon the least encouragement in that way a Chinese populace becomes unmanageable; for the Chinese is a natural *connoisseur* in cowardice; by sympathetic instinct he understands and appreciates every movement of fear. The Consul, therefore, suffered the ladies of his family to traverse the city every day at high noon, and in every direction: not hiding from himself or *them*, meantime, that upon any hostile demonstration from the mob of Shanghai, he and they were lost; for their dwelling was in the very centre of the city, from which no escape was possible. Let the reader, meantime, in estimating this attempt to work upon the Consul's fears for his family, transfer the situation in his imagination to London, and figure to himself our own sheriffs of London and Middlesex, under instructions from the Foreign Office, and from the Privy Council,

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striving to terrify a Chinese envoy from his duty, by suggesting dangerous mobs.

This dodge having failed, the Ta-oo-tae (whom, for the sake of brevity, permit me henceforward to call* by the well-known name of Mr Toots) tried another. He had pledged his word at 10 A.M., that in return for notorious forbearances on the part of the Consul, he would himself abstain from all underhand intrigues with the rice-junks. At 11 A.M. on the same day he issued secret orders that these junks should drop down, and try to slip out by threes and fours, hoping thus to distract the little Childers. This *ruse*, also, having failed, next he practised others more and more childish. He caused, for instance, bricks to be piled elaborately above the rice. But Jack, on board the Childers, found prime larking in watching and baffling all these wiles. The little Childers proved herself "a brick" in maintaining the Consul's embargo; and upon the whole it was certain that the merest trifle, if any at all, of the rice had slipped through.

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* "*To call:*"—But begging pardon of the English Mr Toots, whom we all know to be a kind-hearted and honourable man, for taking such a liberty with his respected name, even for a moment.

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An interdict having simultaneously been put upon the payment of the usual British dues to the custom-house, those who sate at the receipt of custom began to hold a sinecure office. Fine holiday times there were now in Shanghai, which made the Chinese, Mr Toots very popular at that port; but on the other hand, at Peking, and all around the Imperial Exchequer, which showed all the symptoms of galloping consumption, he would have been cursed by bell, book, and candle, had it been known distinctly *who* caused the stoppage. Toots, therefore, fancied that he would try his hand at a new swindle, which could cost him only two dollars and a lie. So, one fine morning he said to the Consul—. What is it you want?—*Cons.* What is it? Why, I should think, you knew pretty well by this time: what I want is—the Tsing-poo knaves.—*Toots.* Well, I've got 'em.—*Cons.* How many?—*Toots.* Two; but, as they were the ringleaders, *that* ought to do.—*Cons.* No: it's too little, by eight. However, as a payment to account, I'll take it: We'll call it a first instalment. But let's have a look at the men; are you sure they are genuine?—*Toots.* Oh, quite. *Cons.* Well, I'll send for the Missionaries. These, on arriving, were intro-

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duced, together with the Consul, to the supposed ruffians; but the whole pretence was instantaneously detected as a hoax. Neither of the men could be recognised by any of the Missionaries; and by an ingenious artifice of the Consul, they were conclusively exposed as swindlers. Concerting his plan with the Missionaries, the Consul challenged both the knaves to answer him this question: one most rememberable incident in the course of the outrage—Had it happened at the east (otherwise the Shanghai) gate, or at the north gate? After an embarrassed pause, both men said—*At the north gate.* Now, in fact, it had happened at neither, but in the very centre of the town, two miles removed from *any* gate. This dodge, therefore, would not work, any more than the brick-masked rice. The two scoundrels were exploded from the stage with peals of laughter,* whilst Mr Toots walked

* This is amongst the commonest tricks of the Chinese Government. When any European has been injured too deeply to admit of a blank denial, half-a-dollar is paid to some Chinese vagabond for personating the delinquent; having been shown once or twice in a public place, he is then withdrawn to some distant station, for the assumed purpose of brigading him with other convicts working out their penal sentences, but in reality to fulfil the bargain by discharging him in a place where the transaction will escape all public notice. This infamous trick suggested the prudence of nominating, in cases affecting our own

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off *re infecta*, saying, *It's of no consequence, not of the very least consequence, not the slightest in the world.*

But nobody could say *that* of the next move in the game. The Consul had by this time become weary of the fool's play, which, because it was childish and girlish beyond all belief to European minds, was not on that account the less knavish or the less dangerous. He was therefore now prepared to play his last and capital card: neither the *rice* embargo nor the *customs'* interdict was of a nature to be long continued—the pressure, growing every hour more severe, would have found a vent in riots, such as neither prudence nor conscience, on our British side, was likely to contemplate steadfastly. The last resource, therefore, in a case where the subordinate magistrates showed no signs of yielding, must be an armed appeal to the higher. This was tried: it was tried instantly; instantly it met with the amplest acquiescence; instantly satisfaction was awarded on each several article of our complaint;

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interests, some inspector to watch the infliction of the sentence. But to this there are various objections; and Lord Palmerston suggested one additional objection, which is painfully insurmountable—namely, that under a cruel government we should be called on to witness (inferentially to sanction) torture.

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and to all appearance (though such appearances are hard to spell in trick-trick-tricking China) the celestial pig-tail curled up wrathfully against Mr Toots, and frowns mantled on the celestial countenance, though Mr Toots persisted in saying that it was of no consequence —not the least; no, I assure you, not of the slightest conceivable consequence. The arch little gipsy, the saucy Espiégle, thought otherwise. She and Mr Toots differed in opinion. For she it was that worked the whole revolution. She it was that carried a certain letter from the Consul, and also the Consul's compliments, into the great river Yang-tse-Keang; and from pure forgetfulness (which I can allow for, being myself subject to frequent absence of mind), she carried at the same time her whole armament of guns. This little ship, finding herself in this huge river, danced a few cotillons up and down; but, at last, night coming on, she settled down to business; ran up to Nanking; asked if the Viceroy lived there; and, finding he did, Jack handed in his papers, saying that the Viceroy would find *a writ* inside for himself. It is inconceivable what a fright and what a *termashaw* were caused by this little Espiégle. For hundreds of miles on both banks of the river were seen men peer-

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ing into honeycombed guns, like magpies into a marrow-bone, cleaning muskets, sharpening swords, drying damp gunpowder. Some reason there was for all this alarm, since the Espiégle had her guns with her; she showed her teeth; and the last time that the "Son of the Ocean"* or any of his children could have seen such teeth had been sixteen years ago: at which date results had followed never to be forgotten by China; for, beyond all doubt, the great social swell, the restlessness, and the billowy state of insurrectionary uproars, that have agitated China ever since their war with us, owe their origin to that war. They trace not only their *time* origin, but their *causal* origin to that war. That war pierced as with Ithuriel's spear the great bloated carcase of China, and what followed? The old Miltonic Ithuriel disledged the mighty form of a leading warrior angel from what had seemed to be a bloated toad; but Great Britain, the Ithuriel of 1842, simply reversed this process; and that which, under old traditional superstitions, had masqueraded as a warrior angel, collapsed, at one touch of the mighty spear, into a bloat-

* *Yang tse-Keang:*—Such is the native designation of this mighty river, nearly 3000 miles long.

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ed toad. The blindness of China prompted her to come (and needlessly to come) into collision with a power the mightiest upon earth; or, under any estimate, mightiest of those that speak from a double centre of land and sea. The title of leader among terraqueous potentates, no rival (however jealous) will refuse to Great Britain; and exactly such a power it was that China should have shunned: because the great nations that are strong only in armies cannot, from the cost and other causes, transfer one-fortieth part of their forces to regions so remote as China. Even St Petersburg is above six thousand miles distant (and therefore Moscow not five hundred miles less) from the very nearest (that is, the northernmost) of the Chinese capitals—namely, Peking; consequently much more from the southern capitals of China; and, meantime, all the populous and most available part of Russia is divided from China by vast (often fountainless) deserts, and by vast (often pathless) steppes. No potentate, therefore, on whom the sun looks down was more to be feared by China as her *evil genius* than Great Britain: none ever showed so much forbearance; none so much forgot her own majesty in desire to conciliate this

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brutal megatherium. Yet upon folly that is doomed all advantages are thrown away. And Britain—that asked nothing from China, but—1. not to swindle by means of a Commissioner Lin; 2. not to patronise murder; 3. to keep a better tongue in her head—could not obtain these most reasonable demands in return for vast commercial benefits. At length that Britain, which China so insolently rejected as a friend, was made the instrument of her chastisement. Not meaning to do more than to repress her insolence, which at length had become an active and contagious nuisance, we probed and exposed her military weakness to an extent that is now irrevocable. Seeking only to defend our own interests, unavoidably we laid bare to the whole world, and therefore to her own mutinous children, the condition of helpless wreck in which China had long been lying prostrate. *The great secret* (whispered no doubt in Asia for some generations) *was broadly exposed.* As some parliamentary candidate rightly expressed it, China is now in a general state of disintegration—rotten in one part, she is hollow in another. On this quarter you detect cancer; on that quarter you find nothing on which cancer could prey. Neither is there any principle of self-restoration. Vital

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stamina there are none; and amongst the children of the state, cruel subjects of a cruel and wicked government, it is vain to count upon any filial tenderness or reverential mercy towards their dying mother. Mercy there is (to use Shakspere's language) about "as much as there is milk in a male tiger;" and as to *principles* that might do the work of alienated affections, who has ever witnessed such springs of action amongst the Chinese? Gone, therefore — burned out — in China, is any one principle of cohesion to which you can look for the restoration of a government. Since *our* war, there has been no general government—none but a local and fractured one: and what has disguised, or partially masked, this state of anarchy, is simply the vast extent of China; secondly, the comatose condition of what are called the *literati;* and thirdly, the discontinuous currency of all public movements, from the want of any real Press; and the want of any such patriotic interests as could ever create a Press.

We therefore having been the organs by which this fatal revolution was effected in China, and our triumph in 1842 having been sealed by the martial events that occurred in the Yang-tse-Keang, naturally enough our re-

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appearance upon that stageawakened memories and fears accounting for a great body of agitation. A generation partly new was growing up, that had heard of us, and read of us, as terrific water-monsters, sharks, or crocodiles, but many of whom had not seen us. In those circumstances, naturally, the rush was great to see our jolly tars of the Espiégle; and disappointed were many that our heads did not grow beneath our shoulders. The presents, and *gages d'amitie*, which we received from the mob, were painfully monotonous — too generally assuming the shape of paving-stones. However, it was pleasant to find that in the distribution of these favours their own countrymen, the mandarins, went along with us — share and share alike: indeed, some thought that *they* got seven to our six, which was inhospitable. Such was our reception from the mob; but from the Viceroy, and what elsewhere we call the *literati*, distinguished was our welcome, and oily the courtesies at our service.

But the great result of the trip to Nanking was, that we gained all the objects contemplated by the Consul in a degree, and with a facility, that no man could have counted on; so that no act of vigour ever perhaps so fully

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justified itself by the results as did this of the Consul. The fact was, they were all alarmed at our presence. Vainly we spoke words of friendship and assurance. The Emperor himself was not very far off, and was agitated by the visit of the little Espiégle; which the crew could not understand, saying, "Bless your heart, the little pet wouldn't harm a fly; she's as quiet as a lamb." She might be so, but the *literati* were all anxious that the lamb should seek her pastures in some other river. This uneasiness was our greatest auxiliary: aided by this, we obtained almost instant despatch; and, that the lamb might have no pretence for coming back to attack the wolves, everything asked for was conceded. Had we asked for Toots's head, we should probably have got it. Within three days, those ten ringleaders, whom Toots had found it so dire an impossibility to produce for trial, were paraded with the cangue (or portable pillory) about their necks in the centre of Shanghai; and subsequently provided with chambers suited to their various walks of study, in select dungeons: the thousand junks, in number, roominess, and elegance of accommodation, probably well representing the thousand "black ships" that followed Admiral Agamemnon to

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the Troad, were all in one minute suffered to unmoor by the little Childers, whose wrath exhaled as suddenly as that of Diana at Aulis. Consequently rice was suddenly "looking down" to a horrible extent in Peking. The customs, which had seemed frozen up, now thawed freely into the celestial breeches-pocket, though sadly intercepted by ravenous mandarins on the way. Concerning all which, though everybody else was pleased, Toots remarked that it wasn't of much consequence; in fact, speaking confidentially, wasn't of *any*, not the least in the world, of no consequence whatever. So terminated, in such triumphant style, and with reparation so ample, this affair of Shanghai, which, left to itself, or confided to any other hands than those of Rutherford Alcock, naturally and rapidly tended to a new war: that tendency it was which so much alarmed the Viceroy. Of all diplomatists, this masterly Rutherford Alcock is least open to the charge of having operated by means of war; since, of all men in China, he happens to be the one who prospered exclusively by preventing a war. An anonymous writer in the "Scotsman" of April 7 (having, however, no sanction * whatever to plead from the *Editor*

* I do not know whether his very long (and not uninteresting)

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of the "Scotsman") is most bitter in his reflections on Consul Alcock; *so* bitter, that all readers will suspect a personal feud as underlying such intemperate language. This I will not repeat; but will content myself with summing up, as a suitable close to the Shanghai narrative. Nine years have now passed since the drama (at one time looking very like a tragedy) closed in a joyous and triumphant catastrophe. There was an *anagnorisis* (ἀναγνωρισις) just such as the Stagirite approves: the Tsing-poo ruffians were all recognised and identified to the satisfaction of a crowded audience by the three Missionaries; they were punished to the extent of what the Chinese law allows, except that death (which that law awards in the case of robbery) was remitted with the cordial assent of the injured parties. And, finally, the Consul, who may be regarded as the hero of this drama, was crowned with

communication of three columns, in small type, may not even be an advertisement. But, assuredly, it is in no harmony with the decisive opinions of that journal. The writer adopts the signature of "Cathay:" now, this (an old name for the northern section of China, China to the north of the Great River, constantly used by writers of our Henry VIII. period, as, for example, Ariosto, who always speaks of Angelica as daughter to the Emperor of Cathay) may properly enough express antiquated doctrines on the subject of China: a superannuated name may appropriately symbolise a superannuated policy—the policy of submission on our part.

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universal praise, and by none more than his official superiors, Sir George Bonham and Lord Palmerston, who had blamed or doubted his policy at first, but had now the candour to allow that its headlong boldness had constituted its main ground of success.

Meantime, no dealing of ours with men born in China could ever pass without a characteristic kick from some Chinese hoof. In this particular case, indeed, all things told so ill for the flowery people, whether gentle or simple, master or man, that the whole might have been expected for once to pass in solemn silence. But this was not to be. The Viceroy had been too thoroughly frightened by Her Majesty's brig Espiégle, not to take out his vengeance in a private letter [marked *confidential*] to the Emperor. How this letter transpired, is no business of mine: it *did*; and well it exemplifies the scoundrelism of the Chinese nature in high quarters equally as in lowest.

The Viceroy describes the Tsing-poo robbery and meditated murder as a brawl between the Missionaries and some boatmen, leaving it to be collected that all the parties were perhaps drunk together, and got to what in Westmoreland is called *scraffling*. And next he in-

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sinuates that the wounds of the Missionaries were mere romances for colouring the pecuniary claim.* It is probable that few of us who read this chapter of Chinese spoliation altogether go along with these Missionaries in their proselytising views upon a people so unspiritual as our brutal friends the Chinese. But we all know the self-denying character of Missionaries as a class, who risk their lives in lands such as China. Poor Mr Medhurst did not live to recover the blessings of English society; for he died immediately after landing in England: but his book speaks for itself. He is wrong, in my opinion, upon various Chinese questions, as particularly in his elaborate chapters upon the probable population of China; and he too much palliates the Chi-

* This honourable viceregal gentleman was here coining a double calumny—first, in pretending to have ground for representing the bodily wounds as fictions; secondly, as fictions meant to sustain a pecuniary claim for indemnity: whereas, no charge at all, great or small, was made for anything whatever, except for the watches, &c., violently torn from the persons of the Missionaries: and by looking to the Blue-book ("Reports respecting Insults in China"), it will be seen that this charge was exceedingly moderate. In fact, it was important to let the mob know that they could not gain by robbery. Meantime, whilst circulating these calumnies in a quarter where he could not be met and contradicted, the Viceroy was perfectly aware that the very same falsehood, calling the affair a *brawl* and an *affray*, had been already attempted and repelled in a lower region.

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nese follies, when he apologises for our own English faith in Francis Moore. Only the lowest of the low in England ever *do* make profession of believing in Moore. Whilst buying his almanack, which (in the common pirated editions of Belfast) was cheap, and met the ordinary purposes of an almanack, the rustic purchaser generally laughed. But, whether wrong or right in trifles, Medhurst was a most generous and a pious man: and the affair at Tsing-poo shows him to have been as brave a man as ever existed; for all the accounts show that, when Mr Lockhart, by dropping behind, had fallen into great peril, Mr Medhurst did not hesitate an instant in turning back and meeting an infuriated mob for the purpose of aiding his friend.

But now, dismissing the past, let us come to our immediate British prospects in China. Gloomy, indeed, are these; and it might seem greatly to lighten this burden, if I should say (which with great truth I *can* say) that we owe our difficulties to our own deplorable want of energy; and by one act of resolution, might effect an instantaneous conquest of the two great obstacles to such a settlement as, under the social disorganisation of China, can now be had. What two obstacles are

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those which I speak of? They are—the Emperor: the most stolid of all known princes, and by force of very impotence an obstructive power; secondly, the city of Canton. I will take this last-mentioned nuisance first. Mr Roebuck puts forward five separate ministers as having urged upon us the policy of forbearing to press our treaty-rights with regard to Canton. One only of the five is really answerable for such counsels—namely, Lord Aberdeen. He held very dangerous and unpatriotic language. The other four may be well represented by Lord Palmerston, whose real language was this—he advised us to keep up our right of free entrance into this city; separately for itself, he thought the right of real importance; and also distinctly so, as a treaty concession to us. What he said in the other direction amounted simply to this—that no harm would perhaps arise from consenting to suspend our claim during a period of refractoriness in the Canton mob. More than this Lord Palmerston could not consistently have said, since he had himself counselled earnestly that the claim should never be dropped, or even intermitted, but only withdrawn to the rear for a short period.

But now, listen, reader, to the arguments

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upon which it is, past all doubting, that the noble viscount would *at present* hold an altered tone. When he counselled delay, he did so under the impression (as openly he avowed) that no immediate benefit was lost through such a momentary suspension of the claim. But now, first of all, as regards both America and ourselves, there have arisen special and intolerable grievances, from the want of building ground in the interior of Canton. The United States agents are complaining more and more upon this head. But what is *that* by comparison with the moral effect from the growing diffusion over all China of our exclusion for the express purpose of degrading us? I have reported circumstantially the behaviour of the Chinese magistracy, ordinary and extraordinary, on occasion of the Fishmonger outrage, in order that it may be seen what sort of new treaties we need for the security of our British brethren in China. Had Mr Consul Alcock failed in his last measure, the lives and property of all our countrymen at Shanghai would not have been worth a year's purchase. Now, lastly, knowing what is wanted, let it be inquired what prospect there is of obtaining it in face of the existing obstacles. What obstacles? Those two which I

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have already mentioned—the wicked city of Canton, and the wicked Emperor; both wicked, both wholesale dealers in murder, but, unfortunately, both stolid and ignorant in an excess, which makes them unmanageable, except by war, or by menaces of war.

I will begin with the first obstacle—namely, Canton—which, without a personal experience of the evil, is hardly appreciable.

To tolerate a notorious and systematic degradation to any body of men, cannot be wise anywhere, but least of all in a nation so ignorant as the Chinese, having no historic knowledge by which to correct any false impressions derived from accident. Crowds of men from Canton flock incessantly to Amoy and Shanghai, where they diffuse the most degrading opinions of the British, and, to some extent, confirm them by the undeniable fact of our stern exclusion from their city.*

Secondly, amongst a people that cannot be thought to have reached a higher stage of in-

* Lieutenant Holman, the blind traveller, reports an infamous trick of the authorities at Canton on this subject. In order to justify the exclusion of the British, they circulated at Peking (where no contradiction was possible) the vilest calumnies as to the habits of the British, charging them with indecencies in public of a character too shocking for public mention.

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tellectual development than that which corresponds to childhood, it is not prudent to suffer any one article of a treaty to be habitually broken. Such infractions are contagious: the knavish counsellor of the Emperor, finding that we submit coolly to one infraction, that aims at nothing confessedly beyond a bitter insult to us, this only, and no dream of any further advantage being proposed, are tempted into trying another infraction, and so onwards. For fourteen years we have allowed ourselves to tolerate this burning scandal; and all the while the successive governors of Canton have been amusing us with moonshine visions that "*the time may come*" when they can think of fulfilling their engagements.* Canton, therefore, has two values—first, on its own account, separately; secondly, on account of its rela-

* The writer under the signature of "Cathay" seems to rehearse with sympathy the furious reiterations of hatred to us by the Cantonese, and to fancy that the very *blindness* of this fury furnishes an argument for treating it with deference. But a just man, though occupying a neutral position, would find in this one feature of the murderous frenzy an adequate argument for resisting it. Had the people of Canton pleaded any reasons for their hatred, drawn from a real experience, they would have found some countenance, more or less, from the disinterested observer. But all men of good feeling recoil with disgust from a headlong *monomania* that glories in its own groundlessness.

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tion to the treaty. Upon this latter point I have spoken. But, as to the other, it is not possible to find words strong enough for the occasion. Mr Consul Alcock, when reviewing the circumstances which, on the one side, constitute, or which, on the other, tend to control, the danger attaching to the British position in China, where a little household, counted by hundreds, is scattered amongst hostile millions, thus brings the weight of his official experience to bear upon the question. He is speaking at the moment of Shanghai; but what he says applies to any and every English station alike:—"Our position is so deeply compromised, and our security from molestation so slight, that Shanghai *will be no better than Canton in an incredibly short period.*"

But what, then, was it that *caused* this gradual assimilation of a port, previously reputed safe, to that one which had always been a city of violence and danger? Simply the example (published over all China) of Canton. The example of itself kindled evil thoughts—without, however, concealing the accompanying dangers of public chastisement or of private retaliation. But the record of its impunity whispered to the malignity of all China, en-

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rude imitation — of our active thought

couraging thoughts of a possible gratification, liberated from the pursuing Nemesis. What this experienced Consul thought upon the subject, even Lord Palmerston, in the midst of his overwhelming labours, may find time to read. It is this: "Too many incidental circumstances have been generally observed in the demeanour and acts of the people and authorities, since the last catastrophe of Canton, for those who have them daily under their eyes, to avoid the conviction that our position *at that port* has exercised a most prejudicial influence upon the minds of both people and authorities. I have long been fully convinced, from the result of my observations at all the three ports where I have resided, *that Canton, and our relations there, have the most serious effect upon our position at all the other ports, and our standing (with the authorities, at least) throughout the empire.*

* Is the reader aware of the insufferable affronts which our countrymen have had to face daily at Canton? How would any of ourselves like this which follows — to be under a necessity, often once a-day, of passing outside of a city, and at the gate of this city to be taunted with our exclusion, in spite of the treaty of — "You red-haired devil dare not for your life enter here!" Then comes derisive grimaces, and, at the same time, a peculiar chirping sound, which these fools suppose to be the characteristic utterance of demons. And, at the same time, the British dealer or

We need a solid arrangement for securing both the *safety* and the *respectability* of the British; for at present we hold equally the unsafe position, and the degraded position, of Jews in the middle ages. Strange it seems, that at this day any one man should have it in his power to expose a new feature in the administration of the Chinese Government; and yet, apparently, it was never noticed by either of our two ambassadors; most certainly it never entered practically into any chapter of their remedial provisions, that a mysterious haze always surrounds the Emperor, fatal to ourselves. In Affghanistan, we found ourselves in this hopeless embarrassment—that no organ existed in the state with which it was possible to form a treaty. He that for the moment had power was the man that could locally give

woman, who is obliged to pass the gate, can make no effectual retort, and is aware that, on entering the town, at all times, whether in public peace or not, a frantic murderous assault will follow. Such a case it may require no great philosophy to endure once or twice; but how, if you were summoned to the same scene of furious indignity through twenty-five years?—and summoned to this by the basest of poltroons, who never stood for ten minutes before our troops, but fled like hares. What injuries to the Chinese reproach us with? They can mention none. The real injury is, that we British are that nation who have dissipated for ever the chimera, worshipped as an idol by China, that she is the supreme nation upon this earth.

effect to a treaty, but only for his own district; and even there, possibly, only for a few weeks. This terrible defect proclaimed ruin to any party whose hopes lay in negotiating. Now, a similar defect exists in China. The Emperor, for most purposes, is a cypher, and cannot give effect to his own wishes, though occasionally they seem just. In 1836, and on some other occasions, he issued an edict, evidently founded on his own dim suspicions that the authorities at Canton were misleading him, and perhaps were themselves causing the turbulent movements which they charged upon the English, by their own attempts to pillage these foreigners. It is plain, from what transpires at long intervals, that an indistinct glimmering of the truth reaches him at times. But too generally no truth ever penetrates to the imperial cabinet.*

* The great mystery in the Chinese administration is, how it can happen that, amongst a variable body like the high mandarins, liable to sudden degradation and exile, with none of the stability attaching to hereditary nobles, any permanent conspiracy for the intercepting of light can prosper. And yet, manifestly, it *does*. Every event of our war with China was concealed from the Emperor. As one gross instance, in 1841, when we had so posted our troops that Canton lay completely at our mercy, the Governor, aware that the capture of Canton would resound through all China, was anxious to buy off this fate by a payment of six million dollars for the opium confiscated by Lin. This

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It is therefore our sad necessity in China, as things stand at present, that we cannot in any satisfactory or binding sense negotiate. In order to figure adequately our embarrassment in this respect, we have only to remember that the particular perplexity which ruined a detachment of our army at Cabul, and cost us 4000 Sepoys, together with nearly 500 British infantry—namely, the absence of any *representative* authority capable of guaranteeing the execution of a treaty—exists virtually in China, under a far less remediable form. It is a misery attaching to all barbarous lands that are under no control from the fraternal responsibilities acknowledged by nations under a system of international law. But the

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was accepted by us, but so reported to the poor foolish prince at Peking, that he published an exulting proclamation, saying that at length chastisement had overtaken us, and we had reaped the just reward of our enormous crimes. Thiry-six hours later he received a little despatch informing him of the ransom, which it was impossible to conceal, since it was to be paid out of His Majesty's poor exhausted treasury. Strange to say, the Emperor detected no contradiction in these two despatches, and continued to believe himself victorious throughout the war, until he found us to be within a few marches of Peking, and another bill, eventually to be paid, of fourteen million dollars. So profound a delusion assuredly never before rested on a ruler, that in most respects is an unlimited despot, even in respect to those who are thus inexplicably combining successfully to deceive him.

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evil which at Cabul oppressed us for a few weeks in China exists for ever, nor will it be at all mitigated until the present convulsions, consequent upon our sharp handling of China in 1842, have accomplished their secret mission of disorganising the bulk, which must be shattered into fragments before it can be usefully re-cast.

An American merchant (so he describes himself on the title-page) wrote a pamphlet on British relations with China in 1834. As a neutral observer, he obtained some attention in England, and one remark of his deserves to be quoted; it is this—"we have seen that the Emperor of China *cannot* be approached by embassies."* This is true; he *cannot*, and he *will not*. In reality, though conspiracies against the person of the Emperor are unaccountably rare, it is probable that, if he did not receive ambassadors brutally and superciliously—if he consented to regard them as representing potentates standing on an equality with himself—he would not reign very long.

* This American goes on to say, with great truth—"To send embassies is only to confirm him in a false superiority, and to give another precedent of refusal to be cited by his successor." So far the writer is reasonable; otherwise, his views are vicious and irrelevant.

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On the pretence that he had degraded the nation, the next heir would be raised to the throne.

An amusing instance of this inflexible arrogance occurred during Lord Amherst's embassy in 1816. The letter from our Regent, of which Lord Amherst was the bearer, began in the form usual amongst sovereign princes—"Sir, my Brother;" but the great mandarins, who most impertinently opened the letter, protested that they could not present such a letter without risk of decapitation. This and a thousand similar anecdotes show us that we cannot send an embassy in the ordinary form, without a gratuitous sacrifice of our own dignity, where there is no prospect of advantage. How, then, does our government propose to proceed? I will briefly array before the reader the only three modes of action which lie within our choice. Under any one of the three it is to be presumed that we shall open the drama by taking military possession of Canton. Toward this object, it is fortunate that partial reinforcements from the Persian Gulf and India will have enabled the present commanders to have made some considerable martial advances before any trader in "*moderation*" and pacific measures, which have so continually proved ruinous when operating upon oriental tempers,

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can have arrived to prejudge the question. Any man who tries the effect of opposite measures will find his surest punishment in general defeat, and in the necessity of soon abruptly changing his policy. After the occupation of Canton, and the summary expulsion of Yeh, whose degradation and signal punishment it is to be hoped will be instantly demanded from the Emperor, we might proceed with a fleet of steam-frigates, and smaller craft, to the mouth of the river Peiho, from which the distance is but small to Peking. Steam transports will carry *some* land forces; *how many* will depend upon the particular scheme of tactics, one out of three, which our government may elect for its policy.

First, although it is true, in the words of the American merchant, that the Emperor of China cannot be approached by embassies, understanding by that term pacific and ceremonial agents prepared to discuss and to arrange international concerns—*that* is no reason for his declining to receive an armed embassy. Our naval force at the mouth of the Peiho will need in that case to be strengthened; and we shall carry in the transports perhaps 7000 picked land troops. With these we shall probably occupy Peking; in which case

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the Emperor would be found to have fled to his Tartar hunting seat. From him personally we should gain nothing. But his flight would by itself publish his defeat, and go far to stamp a character of emptiness upon all his subsequent gasconades. He could, however, as little be dispensed with for any continued period, as the queen-bee from a hive. To stay away, would be to interrupt the whole currency of the national administration. Yet, sometimes, it will be alleged, he *does* stay away for six or eight weeks, doing what he conceives to be "hunting," for the Russian *chargé d'affaires* had the honour to behold His Majesty, when belted with 14,000 men, bravely fire his rifle at a tiger. But in these hunting expeditions, it must be remembered, the intercourse with Peking was kept open by couriers continually on the road; whereas, under our occupation of the capital, the only available road would be interdicted by a British military post at the Wall, through which lies, of necessity, the sole avenue of communication with Mantchoo Tartary. An Emperor who was so effectually frightened by the little saucy Espiègle would be brought upon his knees, and himself "knock head," at the summons of such an expedition as this.

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But this policy requires money and energy, more, I fear, than we are yet prepared to spend upon our Chinese interest, until a great massacre of our British brethren at Amoy or Shanghai shall have abolished for ever all policies suggested by the sons of the feeble.

Secondly, the next policy is that which works by bribery. This method, in times when the East India Company dominated over the China trade, was employed largely, but unfortunately under Chinese compulsion, so that it availed us only in a negative way—that is, we were not kicked out of China. But had no positive returns for our £150,000. Little gratitude or service was received for money given protestingly, and under the screw. Here was the very gall and wormwood of robbery—that nothing was gained apparently by submitting to it. But the Chinese robber thought otherwise, and parried our complaints in the spirit of Æsop's wolf, when replying to the crane's complaint that she had received no fee for her surgical service in extracting a bone from his throat—"How? No fee? Don't you count it none to have withdrawn that long bill of yours in safety from my mouth?" The pretence was, that toleration of this commerce had been a

chased a court by bribes judiciously planted. Mr. Matheson (of the Canton firm, Jardine & Matheson) showed in a very valuable pamphlet, published in 1836, that the wholesome distributed amongst the Emperor's mother, and a quadrille of other old ladies, &c., amounted annually to £150,000. Think, therefore, arithmetical reader, what kind hypocrisy it was in the imperial court, that reaped so largely there it had not room to talk in its grandiloquent strain about the infinite pettiness of this commerce in celestial eyes. No single person's family in China, where all splendour is an unknown thing, and the imperial gifts are seldom worth separately as much as three half-crowns, could spend so much as £3000 a-year. Such a sum, therefore, as £150,000 per annum must mine its way through the court ranks like so many miners' blastings; and, if it has been discontinued since the war, there is no need to wonder that Yehs, and such cattle, are employed. Little doubt but Yeh was sent as a mischief-maker, to remind us, by rough practice, of the need we stand in of a protector at Peking.

This bribery system, however, as shown by Mr. Matheson in his excellent pamphlet of 1836, has always ruinously recoiled upon our

own interests. In one chief instance,* the Canton knaves who pocketed the bribes actually employed those very bribes—how? Let the reader guess. Actually in purchasing at Peking, by re-bribery, the license to coerce and limit our commerce in modes never before attempted.

Finally, there is a third course—namely, again to attempt a *pacific* embassy, such as Lord Macartney's and Lord Amherst's; but—and prudence even on his own behalf will now speak loudly to any man undertaking such an embassy—with great modifications. The two lords of past times had this excuse: they did not know the government to which they were accredited, as we of this generation know them; and the British Government,

* The bribery was practised under the orders of the East India Company. That great Company have, in their vast Indian Empire, been the benefactors of the human race. In China, on the other hand, they it is—they chiefly—who have ruined us. Not by acts only, and the whole stream of their policy, but by direct written injunctions, and general orders, and by special opposition to nobler counsels, they have authorised a cringing mode of tactics. Blind as bats even to their own instant pecuniary interests, they have resisted the employment, in any Chinese case, of a King's officer, because he (said the Company), must support the national honour, which we (as commercial men) may disregard. That one fact shows the policy of the East India Directors.

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ignorant, even as these lords were ignorant, upon the true condition of China, sent them out most inadequately furnished and instructed for the mission before them. In this miserable perplexity, it should never be forgotten, to their praise, that both resisted the killing degradation of the *ko-tou;* and Lord Amherst, in particular, dealing with a more savage Emperor, under a sense of personal danger. If this plea may palliate their conduct for having submitted to be carted about like commercial bales; and at first to be conveyed in junks, bearing banners, inscribed "*The English tribute-bearers*," we must have no more of such passive acquiescences, in studied insults offered to our national honour. Sir G. Staunton*

* It is remarkable that Sir George Staunton, the very man to whose bold remonstrance, in 1816, we owe it that Lord Amherst refused the *ko-tou*, twenty years afterwards published a pamphlet against the admirable pamphlets of Messrs Lindsay and Matheson, treating the idea of a military opposition to China, "with her countless millions," as "wild and desperate," and as mere "infatuation." Unfortunately for Sir George's reputation as a Chinese counsellor, the infatuated plan was actually tried four years later, and succeeded in the amplest extent. But would it not have seemed impossible beforehand that a man of sense should have gathered so little knowledge in fifty years of life, as to fancy mere brute numbers, without arms, without training, without discipline, and, above all, without food, at all formidable to the select soldiers of the earth? In this pamphlet, which really cancelled most of Sir George's earlier merits, he attempted

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attempts to palliate this compliance on the ground that Lords Macartney and Amherst stood firm upon greater questions. There is none greater. It is through these unthinking concessions that we are now reduced to miserable straits. Most truly does Mr Matheson say (pp. 8, 9), "It is humiliating to reflect

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even to varnish the monstrous arrogances of the Chinese Emperor. He asserted (what he of all men should best have known to be untrue) that at least the Emperor had never pretended to any rights over the island of Great Britain; whereas one of the official persons authorised by the court of Peking to accompany Lord Amherst's return by land to Canton, had gravely reminded our people that the Emperor was as truly lord of the British Isles as of Peking; and in this expostulation did not evidently suppose himself advancing any new truth, but simply recalling to our minds an old one, which we were forgetting. Sir George farther insists, that, even at the worst, the Emperor went no further than our own kings, who, until the last alteration of the royal title, in the days of George III., always called themselves Kings of France. But how different the case! We meant only Kings of France *de jure*, not *de facto*. And our original title rested upon a twofold real ground—namely, upon overwhelming victories, which enabled us to crown an infant prince as King of France; and secondly, upon plausible genealogical grounds. Besides that, we used the claim as only a peacock's feather of pomp, but never in the slightest instance attempted to assert any power over a French subject upon this basis. But the Chinese Emperor never cited his pretended claim over Great Britain as less than a solid argument for demanding obedience to himself. And, in the meantime, China, having confessedly never sent any expedition whatever to Europe, could not even in a romance plead such a title.

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that our present degradations in the eyes of China are *self-imposed*.

"The thorns which we have reap'd are of the tree
We planted, they have torn us, and we bleed."

The Memorials addressed to Government in the year 1836, first by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, soon after by the Glasgow East India Association, next by the Liverpool East India Association, all speak the same determined language; strictly applicable to this time. But I quote by preference from the "Canton Memorial." This excellent paper, after insisting indignantly upon the brutal Chinese treatment of Lord Napier,* which persecuted him into a condition of misery that terminated in his death, and urging that ample reparation should be exacted for this outrage, and also "for the arrogant and degrading language used towards your Majesty, and our country, in edicts of the local authorities,

* *Lord Napier.*—The immediate causes of the wrath shown to Lord Napier are still made the subject of dispute amongst all apologists for China, as though there had been an original irregularity in the commission of that ill-used nobleman. But, on comparing all the documents, it is plain, that the true and sole ground of the brutality was the deadly fear that this change would lead to a transfer of all our commercial affairs, from the hands of corrupt and irresponsible local officers, to others of a higher class in immediate communication with Peking.

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wherein your Majesty was represented as the '*reverently submissive tributary* of the Emperor of China,' and your Majesty's subjects as *profligate barbarians*," goes on to suggest that with a small naval force—namely, one ship of the line, two frigates, and four armed vessels of light draught, together with a steam vessel, all fully manned—there would be found no difficulty in putting a stop to the greater part of the external and internal commerce of the Chinese Empire, of intercepting its revenues in their progress to the capital, and in taking possession of all the armed vessels of the country. And such measures, so far from being likely to lead to a more serious collision, would be the surest course for avoiding it.

The Memorial then goes on to this wise counsel:—"We would further urgently submit—that, as we cannot but trace the disabilities under which our commerce labours, to a long acquiescence in the arrogant assumption of supremacy over the monarchs and people of other countries, claimed by the Emperor of China for himself and his subjects, we are forced to conclude that *no beneficial result can be expected to arise from negotiations in which such pretensions are not decidedly repelled.*" Finally, I will quote a passage more

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closely and ominously applicable to any inconsiderate undertaker of this arduous office:—

"We would therefore beseech your Majesty not to leave it to the discretion of any future representative of your Majesty, as *was* permitted in the case of Lord Amherst, to swerve in the smallest degree from a calm and dispassionate, but determined, maintenance of the true rank of your Majesty's empire in the scale of nations."

And the Memorial concludes with this emphatic sentence, just as wise now as it was then:—Our counsel is—"not to permit any future commissioner to set his foot on the shores of China, until ample assurance is afforded of a reception and treatment suitable to the dignity of a minister of your Majesty, and to the honour of an empire that acknowledges no superior on earth."

Who is to go out as our ambassador has not, I believe, as yet been officially made known. But whoever he may be, it is pretty certain that he will fail. Were there no other reason for saying so, how is the following dilemma to be met? A man of rank must be appointed, or the Chinese Emperor will hold himself affronted. Yet, on the other hand, all the Englishmen who speak Chinese are

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not men of rank, but are either supercargoes (some actually serving as such, some *emeriti*), or else Missionaries. There is no time to learn Chinese; and interpreters are perfectly useless, except on a mere mission of ceremony. How is that *fix* to be treated? Œdipus and the Sphinx combined could not solve it.

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CHINA.

In the days of Grecian Paganism, when morals (whether social or domestic) had no connection whatever with the National Religion—it followed that there could be no organ corresponding to our modern Pulpit (Christian or Mahometan) for teaching and illustrating the principles of morality. Those principles, it was supposed, taught and explained themselves. Every man's understanding, heart, and conscience, furnished him surely with light enough for his guidance on a path so plain, within a field so limited, as the daily life of a citizen—Spartan, Theban, or Athenian. In reality, this field was even more limited than at first sight appeared. Suppose the case of a Jew, living in pre-Christian Judea, under the legal code of Deuteronomy and Leviticus—or suppose a Mussulman at this day, living under the control of Mahometan laws, he finds himself left to his own moral discretion hardly in one action out of fifty; so thoroughly has the

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municipal law of his country (the *Pentateuch* in the one case, the *Koran* in the other) superseded and swallowed up the freedom of individual movement. Very much of the same legal restraint tied up the fancied autonomy of the Grecian citizen. Not the moral censor, but the constable was at his heels, if he allowed himself too large a license. In fact, so small a portion of his actions was really resigned to his own discretion, that the very humblest intellect was equal to the call upon its energies. Under these circumstances, what need for any public and official lecturer upon distinctions so few, so plain, so little open to casuistic doubts? To abstain from assault and battery; not to run away from battle *relicta non bene parmula;* not to ignore the deposit confided to his care —these made up the sum of cases that life brought with it as possibilities in any ordinary experience. As an office, therefore, the task of teaching morality was amongst the ancients wholly superfluous. Pulpit there was none, nor any public teacher of morality. As regarded his own moral responsibility, every man walked in broad daylight, needed no guide, and found none.

But Athens, the marvellous city that in all things ran ahead of her envious and sullen

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contemporaries, here also made known her supremacy. Civilisation, not as a word, not as an idea, but as a thing, but as a power, was known in Athens. She only through all the world had a Theatre; and in the service of this theatre she retained the mightiest by far of her creative intellects. Teach she could not in those fields where no man was unlearned; light was impossible where there could be no darkness; and to guide was a hopeless pretension when all aberrations must be wilful. But, if it were a vain and arrogant assumption to illuminate, as regarded those primal truths which, like the stars, are hung aloft, and shine for all alike,* neither vain nor arrogant was it to fly her falcons at game almost as high. If not light, yet life; if not absolute birth, yet moral regeneration, and fructifying warmth—these were quickening forces which abundantly she was able to engraft upon truths else slumbering and inert. Not affecting to teach the new, she could yet vivify the old. Those moral echoes, so solemn and pathetic, that lingered in the ear from her stately tragedies, all spoke with the authority

* I quote a sentiment of Wordsworth's in "The Excursion," but cannot remember its expression.

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of voices from the grave. The great phantoms that crossed her stage, all pointed with shadowy fingers to shattered dynasties and the ruins of once-regal houses, Pelopidæ or Labdacidæ, as monuments of sufferings in expiation of violated morals, or sometimes—which even more thrillingly spoke to human sensibilities—of guilt too awful to be expiated. And in the midst of these appalling records, what is their ultimate solution? From what keynote does Athenian Tragedy trace the expansion of its own dark impassioned music? ὕβρις (*hybris*)—the spirit of outrage and arrogant self-assertion—in that temper lurks the original impulse towards wrong; and to that temper the Greek drama adapts its monitory legends. The doctrine of the Hebrew Scriptures as to vicarious retribution is at times discovered secretly moving through the scenic poetry of Athens. His own crime is seen hunting a man through five generations, and finding him finally in the persons of his innocent descendants. "Curses, like young fowls, come home in the evening to roost." This warning doctrine, adopted by Southey as a motto to his "Kehama," is dimly to be read moving in shadows through the Greek legends and semi-historic traditions. In other words, atrocious crime of any man

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towards others in his stages of power comes round upon him with vengeance in the darkening twilight of his evening. And, accordingly, upon no one feature of moral temper is the Greek Tragedy more frequent or earnest in its denunciations, than upon all expressions of self-glorification, or of arrogant disparagement applied to others.

What nation is it, beyond all that ever have played a part on this stage of Earth, which ought, supposing its vision cleansed for the better appreciation of things and persons, to feel itself primarily interested in these Grecian denunciations? What other than China? When Coleridge, in lyric fury, apostrophised his mother-country in terms of hyperbolic wrath, almost of frenzy,

"The nations hate thee!"

every person who knew him was aware that in this savage denunciation he was simply obeying the blind impulse of momentary partisanship; and nobody laughed more heartily than Coleridge himself, some few moons later, at his own violence. But in the case of China, this apostrophe—*The nations hate thee!*—would pass by acclamation, without needing the formality of a vote. Such has been the

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inhuman insolence of this vilest and silliest amongst nations towards the whole household of man, that (upon the same principle as governs our sympathy with the persons and incidents of a novel or a drama) we are pledged to a moral detestation of all who can be supposed to have participated in the constant explosions of unprovoked contumely to ourselves. A man who should profess esteem for Shakspere's Iago, would himself become an object of disgust and suspicion. Yet Iago is but a fabulous agent; it was but a dream in which he played so diabolic a part. But the offending Chinese not only supported that flesh-and-blood existence which Iago had not, but also are likely (which Iago is not, in any man's dreams) to repeat their atrocious insolencies as often as opportunities offer. Our business at present with the Chinese is—to speculate a little upon the Future immediately before us, so far as it is sure to be coloured by the known dispositions of that people, and so far as it ought to be coloured by changes in our inter-relations, dictated by our improved knowledge of the case, and by that larger experience of Chinese character which has been acquired since our last treaty with their treacherous executive. Meantime, for one mo-

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ment let us fix our attention upon a remarkable verification of the old saying adopted by Southey, that "Curses come home to roost." Two centuries have elapsed, and something more, since our national expansion brought us into a painful necessity of connecting ourselves with the conceited and most ignorant inhabitants of China. From the very first, our connection had its foundations laid in malignity; so far as the Chinese were concerned, in affected disdain, and in continual outbreaks of brutal inhospitality. That we should have reconciled ourselves to such treatment, formed, indeed, one-half of that apology which might have been pleaded on behalf of the Chinese. But why, then, *did* we reconcile ourselves? Simply for a reason which offers the other half of the apology,—namely, that no thoroughly respectable section of the English nation ever presented itself at Canton in those early days as candidates for any share in so humiliating a commerce. On reviewing that memorable fact, we must acknowledge that it offers some inadequate excuse on behalf of the Chinese. They had seen nothing whatever of our national grandeur; nothing of our power; of our enlightened and steadfast constitutional system; of our good faith; of our magnificent

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and ancient literature; of our colossal charities and provision for every form of human calamity; of our insurance system, which so vastly enlarged our moneyed power; of our facilities for combining, and using the powers of all (as in our banks the money of all) common purposes; of our mighty shipping interest; of our docks, arsenals, light-houses, manufactories, private or national. Much beside there was that they could not have understood, so that not to have seen it was of small moment; but these material and palpable indications of power and antiquity, even Chinamen, even Changs and Fangs, Chungs and Fungs, could have appreciated; yet all these noble monuments of wisdom and persevering energy they had seen absolutely not at all. And the men of our nation who had resorted to Canton were too few at any time to suggest an impression of national greatness. Numerically, we must have seemed a mere vagrant tribe; and, as the Chinese even in 1851, and in the council-chamber of the Emperor, settled it as the most plausible hypothesis that the English people had no territorial home, but made a shift (like some birds) to float upon the sea in fine weather, and in rougher seasons to run for "holes," upon the whole, we English are worse off than

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are the naked natures that affront the elements:—

"If on windy days the raven
Gambol like a dancing skiff,
Not the less he loves his haven
On the bosom of a cliff.

"Though almost with eagle pinion
O'er the rocks the chamois roam,
Yet he has some small dominion
Which no doubt he calls his home."

Yes, no doubt. But worse off than all these—than sea-horse, raven, chamois—the Englishman, it seems, of Chinese ethnography has not a home, except in crevices of rocks. What are we to think of that nation, which by its supreme councils could accredit such follies? We in fact suffer from the same cause, a thousandfold exaggerated, as that which injured the French in past times amongst ourselves. Up to the time when Voltaire came twice to England, no Frenchman of eminence, or distinguished talents, had ever found a sufficient motive for resisting his home-loving indolence so far as to pay us a visit. The *court* had been visited in the days of James I. by Sully; in those of Charles II. by De Grammont; but the nation for itself, and with an honourable enthusiasm, first of all by Voltaire. What was the consequence? No Frenchman ever

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coming amongst us—except (1) as a cook; (2) as a hairdresser; (3) as a dancing-master—was it unnatural in the English to appreciate the French nation accordingly?

"Paulum sepultæ distat inertiæ
Celata virtus."

What they showed us, *that*, in commercial phrase, we carried to their account; what they gave, for *that* we credited them; and it was unreasonable to complain of *our* injustice in a case where so determinately they were unjust to themselves. Not until lately have we in England done any justice to the noble qualities of our French neighbours. But yet, for this natural result of the intercourse between us, the French have to thank themselves. With Canton the case was otherwise. Nobody having freedom could be expected to visit such a dog-kennel, where all alike were muzzled, and where the neutral ground for exercise measured about fifteen pocket-handkerchiefs. Accordingly, the select few who had it *not* in their power to stay away, proclaimed themselves *ipso facto* as belonging to that class of persons who are willing to purchase the privilege of raising a fortune at any price, and through any sacrifice of dignity, personal or national. Almost excusably, therefore, the

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British were confounded for a time with the Portuguese and the Dutch, who had notoriously practised sycophantic arts, carried to shocking extremities. The first person who taught the astonished Chinese what difference might happen to lurk between nation and nation was Lord Anson—not yet a lord; in fact, a simple commodore, and in a crazy old hulk; but who, in that same superannuated ship, had managed to plough up the timbers of the Acapulco galleon, though by repute* bullet-proof, and eventually to make prize of considerably more than half-a-million sterling for himself and his crew. Having accomplished this little feat, the commodore was not likely to put much value upon the "crockery ware" (as he termed the forts) of the Chinese. Not come, however, upon any martial mission, he confined himself to so much of warlike demonstration as sufficed for his own immediate purposes. To place our Chinese establishments upon a

* "*By repute:*"—The crew of the Centurion were so persuaded that these treasure-galleons were impregnable to ordinary cannon-balls, that the commodore found it advisable to reason with them; and such was their confidence in him, that upon his promise to find a road into the ship if they would only lay him alongside of her, they unanimously voted the superstition a Spanish lie.

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more dignified footing was indeed a most urgent work; but work for councils more deliberate, and for armaments on a far larger scale. As regarded the present, such was the vast distance between Canton and Peking, that there was no time for this Anson aggression to reach the ears of the Emperor's council, before all had passed off. It was but a momentary typhoon, that thoroughly frightened the flowery people, but was gone before it could influence their policy. By a pleasant accident, the Manilla treasure captured by Anson was passing in waggons in the rear of St James's Palace, during the natal hour of the Prince of Wales (George IV.); consequently we are within sight, chronologically, of the period which will round the century dated from Lord Anson's assault. Within that century is comprised all that has ever been done by war or by negotiation to bring down upon their knees this ultra-gasconading, but also ultra-pusillanimous, nation. Some thirty and more years after the Anson skirmish, it was resolved that the best way to give weight and splendour to our diplomatic overtures was by a solemn embassy, headed by a man of rank. At that time the East India Company had a monopoly interest in the tea trade of

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Canon, as subsequently in the opium trade. What we had to ask from the Chinese was generally so reasonable, and so indispensable to the establishment of our national name upon any footing of equality, that it ought not for a moment to have been tolerated as any subject for debate. There is a difficulty, often experienced even in civilised Europe, of making out any just equations between the titular honours of different states. Ignorant people are constantly guided in such questions by mere vocal resemblances. The acrimonious Prince Pückler Muskau, so much irritated at being mistaken in France for an Englishman, and in fifty ways betraying his mortifying remembrances connected with England, charges us with being immoderately addicted to a reverential homage towards the title of "Prince;" in which, to any thoughtful man, there would be found no subject for blame; since with us there *can* be no prince* that is not by blood connected with the royal family; so that such

* "*Can be no prince:*"—In the technical heraldic usage, a duke in our peerage is styled a prince. But this book honour finds no acceptation or echo in the usage of life; not even in cases, like those of Marlborough and Wellington, where the dukes have received princedoms from foreign sovereigns, and might, under the sanction of their own sovereign, assume their continental honours.

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a homage is paid under an erroneous impression as to the fact, but not the less under an honourable feeling as to the purpose; which is that of testifying the peculiar respect in a free country cheerfully paid to a constitutional throne. But, if we had been familiarised with the mock princes of Sicily and Russia (amongst which last are found some reputed to have earned a living in St Petersburg as barbers), we should certainly moderate our respect towards the bearers of princely honours. Every man of the world knows how little a French marquise or comptesse can pretend to rank with a British marchioness or countess; as reasonably might you suppose an equation between a modern consul of commerce and the old Roman consul of the awful S. P. Q. R.

In dealing with a vile trickster like the Chinese executive—unacquainted with any one restraint of decorum or honourable sensibility—it is necessary for a diplomatist to be constantly upon his guard, and to have investigated all these cases of international equation, before coming abruptly to any call for a decision in some actual case. Cromwell was not the man to have attached much importance to the question of choosing a language for the embodying of a treaty, or for the intercourse of the

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hostile envoys in settling the terms of such a treaty; and yet, when he ascertained that the French Court made it a point of honour to use their own language, in the event of any modern language being tolerated, he insisted upon the adoption of Latin as the language of the treaty.* With the Chinese, a special, almost a superstitiously minute, attention to punctilios is requisite, because it has now become notorious that they assign a symbolic and representative value to every act of intercourse between their official deputies and all foreign ambassadors. Does the ambassador dine at some imperial table—the Emperor has been feeding the barbarians. Do some of the court mandarins dine with the ambassador—then the Emperor has deigned to restore happiness to the barbarians, by sending those who represent his person to speak words of hope and

* This tells favourably for Cromwell as an instance of fair and honourable nationality in one direction; and yet in the counter direction how ill it tells for his discernment, that, in forecasting a memoir on his own career for continental use, and therefore properly to be written in Latin, his thoughts turned (under some unaccountable bias) to continental writers, descending even to such a fellow as Meric Casaubon, the son, indeed, of an illustrious scholar, but himself a man of poor pretensions; and all the while this English-hearted Protector utterly overlooked his own immortal secretary

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consolation. Does the ambassador convey presents from his own sovereign to the Emperor—the people of Peking are officially informed that the barbarians are bringing their tribute. Does the Emperor make presents to the ambassador—in that case, His Majesty has been furnishing the means of livelihood to barbarians exhausted by pestilence, and by the failure of crops. Huc, the French Missionary, who travelled in the highest north latitudes of China, traversing the whole of the frightful deserts between Peking and Lassa (or, in *his* nomenclature, La Sae), the capital of Thibet, and who, speaking the Mongol language, had the rare advantage of passing for a native subject of the Chinese Empire, and therefore of conciliating unreserved confidence, tells us of some desperate artifices practised by the Imperial Government. In particular, he mentions this:—Towards the close of the British War, a Tartar general—reputed invincible—had been summoned from a very distant post in the north to Peking, and thence immediately despatched against the detested enemy. Upon this man's *prestige* of invincibility, and upon the notorious fact that he really had been successful in repressing some predatory aggressors in one of the Tartarys, great

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hopes were built of laurel crops to be harvested without end, and of a dreadful retribution awaiting the doomed barbarian enemy. Naturally this poor man, in collision with the English forces, met the customary fate. M. Huc felt therefore a special curiosity to learn in what way the Chinese Government had varnished the result in this particular case, upon which so very much of public interest had settled. This interest being in its nature so personal, and the name of the Tartar hero so notorious, it had been found impossible for the Imperial Government to throw their mendacity into its usual form of blank denial, applied to the total result, or of intricate transformation, applied to the details. The barbarians, it was confessed, had for the present escaped. The British defeat had *not* been of that vast extent which was desirable; but why? The reason was, that, in the very paroxysm of martial fury, on coming within sight of the barbarians, the Tartar general was seized by the very impertinent* passion of pity. He pitied the poor wretches; through which mistake in his passions, the red-haired devils effected their escape, doing, however, various

* "*Impertinent:*"—*i. e.*, according to an old and approved parliamentary explanation, not pertinent, irrelevant.

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acts of mischief in the course of the said escape; such being the English mode of gratitude for past favours.

With a government capable of frauds like these, and a people (at least in the mandarin class) trained through centuries to a conformity of temper with their government, we shall find, in the event of any more extended intercourse with China, the greatest difficulty in maintaining the just equations of rank and privilege. But the difficulty as regards the people of the two nations promises to be a trifle by comparison with that which besets the relations between the two crowns. We came to know something more circumstantially about this question during the second decennium of this nineteenth century. The unsatisfactoriness of our social position had suggested the necessity of a second embassy. Probably it was simply an accidental difference in the temper of those forming at that time the Imperial Council, which caused the ceremonial *ko-tou* of court presentation to be debated with so much more of rancorous bigotry. Lord Amherst was now the ambassador, a man of spirit and dignity, to whom the honour of his country might have been safely confided, had he stood in a natural and intelligible posi-

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tion; but it was the inevitable curse of an ambassador to Peking, that his official station had contradictory aspects, and threw him upon incompatible duties. His first duty was to his country; and nobody, in so many words, denied *that*. But this patriotic duty, though a *conditio sine qua non* for his diplomatic functions, and a perpetual restraint upon their exercise, was not the true and efficient *cause* of his mission. That lay in the commercial interests of a great company. This secondary duty was clearly his paramount duty, as regarded the good sense of the situation. Yet the other was the paramount duty, as regarded the sanctity of its obligation, and the impossibility of compromising it by so much as the shadow of a doubt or the tremor of a hesitation. Nevertheless, Lord Amherst was plied with secret whispers (more importunate than the British public knew) from the East India Company, suggesting that it was childish to lay too much stress on a pure ceremonial usage, of no more weight than a bow or a curtsey, and which pledged neither himself nor his country to any consequences. But in its own nature the homage was that of a slave. Genuflections, prostrations, and knockings of the ground nine times with the forehead, were

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not modes of homage to be asked from the citizen of a free state, far less from that citizen when acting as the acknowledged representative of that state.

For one moment, let us pause to review this hideous degradation of human nature which has always disgraced the East. That no Asiatic state has ever debarbarised itself is evident from the condition of WOMAN at this hour all over Asia, and from this very abject form of homage, which already in the days of Darius and Xerxes we find established, and extorted from the compatriots of Miltiades and Themistocles.*

* We may see by the recorded stratagem of an individual Greek, cunning enough, but, on the other hand, not at all less base than that which he sought to escape, that these prostrations (to which Euripides alludes with such lyrical and impassioned scorn, in a chorus of his "Orestes," as fitted only for Phrygian slaves) must have been exacted from all Greeks alike, as the *sine qua non* for admission to the royal presence. Some Spartan it was, already slavish enough by his training, who tried the artifice of dropping a ring, and affecting to pass off his prostrations as simply so many efforts to search for and to recover his ring. But to the feelings of any honourable man, this stratagem would not avail him. One baseness cannot be evaded by another. The anecdote is useful, however; for this picturesque case, combined with others, satisfactorily proves that the sons of Greece could and did submit to the *ko-tou* for the furtherance of what seemed to them an adequate purpose. Had newspapers existed in those days, this self-degradation would have purchased

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There cannot be any doubt that the *ko-tou* had descended to the court of Susa and Persepolis from the elder court of Babylon, and to *that* from the yet elder court of Nineveh. Man in his native grandeur, standing erect, and with his countenance raised to the heavens

[*Os homini sublime dedit, cœlumque tueri*],

presents a more awful contrast to man when passing through the shadow of this particular degradation, than under any or all of the other symbols at any time devised for the sensuous expression of a servile condition—scourges, ergastula, imbubation, or the neck-chains and ankle-chains of the Roman *atriensis*. "The bloody writing" is far more legible in this than any other language by which the slavish condition is or can be published to the world, because in this only the sufferer of the degradation is himself a party to it, an accomplice in his own dishonour. All else may have been

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more infamy in Greece than benefit in Persia. The attempted evasion by this miserable Greek, who sought to have the benefits of the *ko-tou* without paying its price, thinking, in fact, that honour could be saved by swindling, seems on a level with that baseness ascribed (untruly, it may be hoped) to Galileo, whom some persons represent as seeking to evade his own formal recantation of the doctrine as to the earth's motion, by muttering inaudibly, "But it *does* move, for all that." This would have been the trick of the Grecian ring-dropper.

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the stern doom of calamitous necessity. Here only we recognise, without an opening for disguise or equivocation, the man's own deliberate act. He has not been branded passively (personal resistance being vain) with the record of a master's ownership, like a sheep, a mule, or any other chattel, but has solemnly branded himself. Wearing, therefore, so peculiar and differential a character, to whom is it in modern days that this bestial yoke of servitude as regards Christendom owes its revival? Without hope, the Chinese despot would not have attempted to enforce such a Moloch vassalage upon the western world. Through whom, therefore, and through whose facile compliance with the insolent exaction, did he first conceive this hope?

It has not been observed, so far as we know, that it was Peter I. of Russia, vulgarly called Peter the Great, who prepared for us that fierce necessity of conflict, past and yet to come, through which we British, standing alone—but henceforth, we may hope, energetically supported by the United States, if not by France—have, on behalf of the whole western nations, victoriously resisted the arrogant pretensions of the East. About four years after the death of our Queen Anne, Peter

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despatched from St Petersburg (his new capital, yet raw and unfinished) a very elaborate embassy to Peking, by a route which measured at least ten thousand versts; or, in English miles, about two-thirds of that distance. It was, in fact, a vast caravan, or train of caravans, moving so slowly, that it occupied sixteen calendar months in the journey. Peter was by natural disposition a bully: offering outrages of every kind upon the slightest impulse, no man was so easily frightened into a retreat and abject concessions as this drunken prince. He had at the very time of this embassy submitted tamely to a most atrocious injury from the eastern side of the Caspian. The Khan of Khiva—a place since made known to us all as the foulest of murdering dens—had seduced by perfidy the credulous little army despatched by Peter into quarters so widely scattered, that with little difficulty he had there massacred nearly the whole force; about three or four hundreds out of so many thousands being all that had recovered their vessels on the Caspian. This atrocity Peter had pocketed, and apparently found his esteem for the Khan greatly increased by such an instance of energy. He was now meditating by this great Peking embassy two objects—first, the ordi-

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nary objects of a trading mission, together with the adjustment of several disputes affecting the Russian frontier towards Chinese Tartary and Thibet; but, secondly, and more earnestly, the privilege of having a resident minister at the capital of the Chinese Emperor. This last purpose was connected with an evil result for all the rest of Christendom. It is well known to all who have taken any pains in studying the Chinese temper and character, that obstinacy—obstinacy like that of mules—is one of its foremost features. And it is also known, by a multiplied experience, that the very greatest importance attaches in Chinese estimate to the initial movement. Once having conceded a point, you need not hope to recover your lost ground. The Chinese are, as may easily be read in their official papers and acts, intellectually a very imbecile people; and their peculiar style of obstinacy is often found in connection with a feeble brain, and also (though it may seem paradoxical) with a feeble moral energy. Apparently, a secret feeling of their own irresolution throws them for a vicarious support upon a mechanic resource of artificial obstinacy. This peculiar constitution of character it was on the part of the Chinese which gave such vast importance to what might now

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be done by the Russian ambassador. Who was he? He was called M. De Ismaeloff, an officer in the Russian guards, and somewhat of a favourite with the Czar. What impressed so deep a value upon this gentleman's acts at this special moment was, that a great crisis had now arisen for the appraisal of the Christian nations. None hitherto had put forward any large or ostentatious display of their national pretensions. Generally for the scale of rank as amongst the Chinese, who know nothing of Europe, they stood much upon the casual proportions of their commerce, and in a small degree upon old concessions of some past Chinese ruler, or upon occasional encroachments that had become settled through lapse of time. But in the East all things masqueraded and belied their home character. Popish peoples were, at times, the firmest allies of bigoted Protestants; and the Dutch, that in Europe had played the noblest of parts as the feeble (yet eventually the triumphant) asserters of national rights, everywhere in Asia, through mean jealousy of England, had become but a representative word for hellish patrons of slavery and torture. All was confusion between the two scales of appreciation, domestic and foreign, European and Asiatic. But now was

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coming one that would settle all this in a transcendent way: for Russia would carry in her train, and compromise by her decision, most of the other Christian states. The very frontier line of Russia, often conterminous with that of China, and the sixteen months' journey, furnished in themselves exponents of the Russian grandeur. China needed no interpreter for *that*. She herself was great in pure virtue of her bigness. But here was a brother bigger than herself. We have known and witnessed the case where a bully, whom it was found desirable to eject from a coffee-room, upon opening the window for that purpose, was found too big to pass, and also nearly too heavy to raise, unless by machinery; so that in the issue the bully maintained his ground by virtue of his tonnage. That was really the case oftentimes of China. Russia seemed to stand upon the same basis of right as to aggression. China, therefore, understood her, and admired her; but for all *that* meant to make a handle of her. She judged that Russia, in coming with so much pomp, had something to ask. So had China. China, during that long period when M. De Ismaeloff was painfully making way across the steppes of Asia, had leisure to think what it was that she would ask, and through

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what temptation she would ask it. There was little room for doubting. Russia being incomparably the biggest potentate in Christendom (for as yet the United States had no existence), seemed, therefore, to the Chinese mind the greatest, and virtually to include all the rest. What Russia did, the rest would do. M. De Ismaeloff meant doubtless to ask for something. No matter what it might be, he should have it. At length the ambassador arrived. All his trunks were unpacked; and then M. De Ismaeloff unpacked to the last wrapper his own little request. The feeble-minded are generally cunning; and therefore it was that the Chinese Council did not at once say *yes*, but pretended to find great difficulties in the request—which was simply to arrange some disorders on the frontier, but chiefly to allow of a *permanent* ambassador from the Czar taking up his residence at Peking. At last this demand was granted—but granted conditionally. And what now might be the little condition? "Oh, my dear fellow—between you and me, such old friends," said the Chinese minister, "a bauble not worth speaking of; would you oblige me, when presented to the Emperor, by knocking that handsome head of yours nine times—*i. e.*, you know,

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three times three—against the floor? I would take it very kindly of you; and the floor is padded to prevent contusions." Ismaeloff pondered till the next day; but on that next day he said, "I will do it,"—"Do what, my friend?"—"I will knock my forehead nine times against the padded floor." Mr Bell, of Antermony (which, at times, he writes Auchtermony), accompanied the Russian ambassador, as a leading person in his suite. A considerable section of his travels is occupied with this embassy. But, perhaps from private regard to the ambassador, whose character suffers so much by this transaction, we do not recollect that he tells us in so many words of this Russian concession. But M. De Lange, a Swedish officer, subsequently employed by the Czar Peter, does. A solemn court-day was held. M. De Ismaeloff attended. Thither came the allegada, or Chinese prime minister; thither came the ambassador's friends and acquaintances; thither came, as having the official *entree*, the ambassador's friend Hum-Hum, and also his friend Bug-Bug; and when all is said and done, this truth is undeniable—that there and then (namely, in the imperial city of Peking, and in Anno Domini 1720), M. De Ismaeloff did knock his forehead nine times

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against the floor of the Tartar Khan's palace. M. De Lange's report on this matter has been published separately; neither has the fact of the prostration and the forehead knockings to the amount of nine ever been called in question.

Now, it will be asked, did Ismaeloff absolutely consent to elongate himself on the floor, as if preparing to take a swim, and then knock his forehead repeatedly, as if weary of life—somebody counting all the while with a stop watch, No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, and so on? Did he do all this without capitulating—*i. e.*, stipulating for some ceremonial return upon the part of the Chinese? Oh no; the Russian ambassador, *at* the beginning of the eighteenth century, and our own at the end of it, both bargained for equal returns; and here are the terms:—The Russian had, with good faith, and through all its nine sections, executed the *ko-tou*; and he stipulated, before he did this, that any Chinese seeking a presentation to the Czar should, in coming to St Petersburg, go through exactly the same ceremony. The Chinese present all replied with good faith, though doubtless stifling a little laughter, that *when* they or any of them should come to St Petersburg, the *ko-tou* should be religiously

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performed. The English lords, on the other hand — Lord Macartney, and subsequently Lord Amherst—declined the *ko-tou*, but were willing to make profound obeisances to the Emperor, provided these obeisances were simultaneously addressed by a high mandarin to the portrait of George III. In both cases a man is shocked: by the perfidy of the Chinese in offering, by the folly of the Christian envoys in accepting, a mockery so unmeaning. Certainly the English case is better; our envoy escaped the degradation of the *ko-tou*, and obtained a shadow; he paid less, and he got in exchange what many would think more. Homage paid to a picture, when counted against homage paid to a living man, is but a shadow; yet a shadow wears some semblance of a reality. But, on the other hand, for the Russian who submitted to an abject degradation, under no hope of any equivalent, except in a contingency that was notoriously impossible, the mockery was full of insult. The Chinese do not travel; by the laws of China they cannot leave the country. None but starving and desperate men ever *do* leave the country. All the Chinese emigrants now in Australia, and the great body at this time quitting California in order to evade the pres-

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sure of American laws against them, are liable to very severe punishment (probably to decapitation) on re-entering China. Had Ismaeloff known what a scornful jest the Emperor and his council were enacting at his expense, probably he would have bambooed some of these honourable gentlemen, on catching them within the enclosed court of his private residence.*

* There seems to have been a strange blunder at the bottom of all our diplomatic approaches to the Court of China, if we are to believe what the lexicographers tell us—namely, that the very word in Chinese which we translate ambassador, means *tribute-bearer*. If this should be true, it will follow that we have all along been supposed to approach the Emperor in a character of which the meaning and obligations were well known to us, but which we had haughtily resolved to violate. There is, besides, another consideration which calls upon us to investigate this subject. It would certainly be a ludicrous discovery if it should be found that we and the Chinese have been at cross-purposes for so long a time. Yet such things *have* occurred, and in the East are peculiarly likely to occur, so radically incompatible is our high civilisation with their rude barbarism; and precisely out of this barbarism grows the very consideration we have adverted to as laying an arrest upon all that else we should have a right to think. It is this: so mean and unrefined are the notions of oriental nations, that, according to those, it is very doubtful indeed whether an eastern potentate would be able to understand or figure to himself any business, or office, belonging to an ambassador, except that of declaring war and defiance; or, secondly, of humbly bringing tribute! Hence, we presume, arises the Chinese rigour in demanding to know the substance of any letter before admitting the bearer of it to the imperial presence; since, if it should happen to contain a defiance, in that

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However, in a very circuitous way, Ismaeloff *has* had his revenge; for the first step in that retribution which we described as overtaking the Chinese was certainly taken by him. Russia, according to Chinese ideas of greatness, is the greatest (*i. e.*, broadest and longest) of Christian states. Yet, being such, she has taken her dose of *ko-tou*. It followed, then, *a fortiori*, that Great Britain should take *hers*. Into this logic China was misled by Ismaeloff. The English were waited for. Slowly the occasions arrived; and it was found by the Chinese, first doubtfully, secondly beyond all doubt, that the *ko-tou* would not do. The game was up. Out of this catastrophe, and the wrath which followed it, grew ultimately the opium-frenzy of Lin, the mad Commissioner of Canton; then the vengeance which followed; next the war, and the miserable defeats of the Chinese. All this followed out of the attempt to enforce the *ko-tou*,

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case they presume that the messenger might indulge himself in insolence; and this it might not be safe to punish in any nation where the sanctity of heralds still lingers, and a faith in the mysterious perils overtaking all who violate that sanctity. Wherever there are but two categories—war and tributary submission—into which the idea of ambassador subdivides, then it must be difficult for the Chinese to understand in which it is that we mean to present ourselves at Peking.

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which attempt never would have been made but for the encouragement derived from Ismaeloff, the ambassador of so great a power as Russia. But finally, to complete the great retribution, the war has left behind, amongst other dreadful consequences, the ruin of their army. In the official correspondence of a great officer with the present Emperor, reporting the events of the Tae-ping rebellion, it is repeatedly declared that the royal troops will not fight, run away upon the slightest pretext, and in fact have been left bankrupt in hope and spirit by the results of their battles with the British. Concurrently with this ruin of the army, the avowed object of this great rebellion is to *exterminate* the reigning dynasty; and if that event should be accomplished, then the whole of this ruin will have been due exclusively to its memorable insolence (the demoniac *hybris* of Greek Tragedy) towards ourselves. Should, on the other hand, the Tae-ping rebellion, which has now stood its ground for five years, be finally crushed, not the less an enormous revolution—possibly a greater revolution—will then have been accomplished in China, virtually our own work; and fortunately it will not be in our power to retreat, as hitherto, in a false spirit of forbearance,

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from the great duties which will await us. The Tae-ping faction, however, though deadly and tiger-like in the spirit of its designs, offers but one element amongst many that are now fermenting in the bosom of Chinese society. We British, as Mr Meadows informs us (p. 137 of "The Chinese and their Rebellions"), were regarded by the late Emperor—by him who conducted the war against us—as the instruments employed "by Heaven" for executing judgment on his house. He was in the right to think so; and our hope is, that in a very few years we shall proclaim ourselves through Southern Asia as even more absolutely the destroyers of the wicked government which dared to promote and otherwise to reward that child of hell who actually *flayed alive* the unhappy Mr Stead. That same government passed over without displeasure the similar atrocity of the man who decapitated nearly 200 persons—white, brown, and black, but all subjects of Great Britain, and all confessedly and necessarily unoffending, as being simply shipwrecked passengers thrown on the shore of China from the Nerbudda Indiaman. That same government gave titles, money, and decorations, to a most cowardly officer, on the sole assumption (whether simply false, or only

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exaggerated) that he had secretly poisoned 1000 British troops stationed in the island of Chusan.*

Hardly a few weeks have passed since our initial notice of China, before already a new interest has gathered round the subject: a foreign interest, and a domestic interest; an interest derived from atrocities that are accomplished; an interest derived from perils that are impending; an interest such as the intelligent counted upon from the known perfidy of the Chinese; an interest more embittered than any of us expected from the factious violence of our own Senate. Let not this expression be taxed with disrespect. Critical cases have a privilege; and we do but echo the clamour of the nation in its main centres of wealth and population, in London, Manchester, Liverpool, when we denounce the recent intrusions of our Legislature upon our old Chinese policy, by

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* In the 26th Regiment alone 800 men died. This, it is true, was chiefly at Hong-Kong; but the disease was mysterious; for the *stationary* inhabitants of Hong-Kong did not die. Is it not therefore open to reasonable conjecture that the men had swallowed a slow poison?

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means of a tumultuary cabal, as tending, too palpably, to a collusion with the vilest purposes of our vilest oriental enemy. Have we forgot our experience? Fifteen years ago it cost Great Britain an average of three pitched battles for the unrooting from the Chinese intellect of each separate childish conceit or traditional fraud, that risked, that fettered, or that degraded (according to the caprice of the hour) one great commercial interest of the civilised earth.

To revise a treaty with China, to correct the text even of a solitary paragraph, or to introduce a supplementary clause, you must make your estimate for so many cannon-shot, rockets, and shells, one or two campaigns, general actions counted by the dozen, and suicides by the thousand.* In a land, there-

* "*Suicides by the thousand:*"—The Chinese, amongst our antagonists, did not commit suicide when routed; the Tartars did. But it is a point still unsettled, whether this act were regarded by them as a measure of unavoidable desperation, under their anticipation of a death possibly cruel, but if not, a degrading vassalage at the hands of their conquerors; or whether, even if made aware of our merciful usages, they would not still have held their *sacramentum militare*—the faith which they had pledged to their wicked emperor—paramount in obligation to any release, howsoever framed or worded by us, from the penalties of their condition as captives. There is, however, ground for a

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fore, where the most reasonable alterations are not effected otherwise than at the point of the bayonet, too painfully we are reminded that any encouragement to the aggressors from ourselves, as arguing internal feuds in our own camp, will tend to perpetuate the dispute.

On the 8th day of October, 1856, about eight o'clock in the morning, a very complex outrage was perpetrated near Canton by Chinese agents, some of them mandarins, wearing their official costume, upon a commercial vessel apparently, and according to all legal presumption, BRITISH. In that word lay the crime of the offence. What the Chinese Governor of Canton hungered and thirsted to put an end to was, his hatred and contempt of our national flag—hatred that was real, contempt that was affected. In this branch of the offence merged all the rest, as by comparison trivial misdemeanours that might have been redeemed by a money payment; else the

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reasonable presumption that the Tartars generally, whom as brave men our army universally respected, would not have refused quarter if it had been fully explained to them, nor would, in that case, have felt suicide a duty; because those among them whom wounds and helplessness had disabled from attempting suicide, were deeply and pathetically impressed by the tenderness of their treatment in our hospitals, and even more so by the parting marks of respect which they received on their discharge.

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wrong was *not* trivial suffered by the crew—*i. e.*, by twelve men out of fourteen—arrested upon a doubt (probably simulated), affecting, at most, one man of the whole dozen;* secondly, the injury was *not* trivial suffered by the master in command of the ship, Thomas Kennedy, a British subject of good repute, born at Belfast; thirdly, the injury was *not* trivial suffered by some owner (as yet not clearly indicated) from an indefinite interruption to the commercial uses of his ship and cargo. These were wrongs, infamous when viewed as the promptings of one solitary official man, placed by his sovereign at the head of a great province for the maintenance of order and for the distribution of justice; but yet trifles, when ranked against other acts of the same ruler, and against the unprovoked insult which he had offered to our national flag.

This insult being accomplished, next came the judicial investigation, on *our* part, into its

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* "*Affecting at most two men, perhaps one:*"—And this "one" challenged upon these two worshipful grounds—first, that he had something "red" in a part of his dress—so much went for little even in China: but then, secondly, he had lost one (or by'r lady it might be two) of his front teeth, but whether in the upper jaw or in the lower, the witness did not specify.

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circumstances; after which began the punishment inflicted by Admiral Seymour; and *that*, though exemplary, is far indeed from having yet reached its consummation. In both chapters of the avenging work which ran so fast upon the heels of the abominable outrage, there occurred circumstances which merit notice. Let me cite two. The particular vessel which furnished the arena for Governor Yeh's atrocity was locally classed as a *lorcha*, and known by the name of the Arrow. It is immaterial to pause for a description or definition of a "lorcha," since no allegation whatever, on one side or on the other, is at all affected by the classification of the ship. But any fair and upright reviewer of the case, who wishes earnestly to hold the scales even between the parties, is likely enough to find himself perplexed by the contradictory statements as to the past history of the particular *lorcha* concerned. He will find in the Blue-book* recently laid before Parliament on this Canton explosion, a letter from Sir J. Bowring himself, in which he seems to admit that all was not sound in the pretensions of the Arrow; and, at first sight, the English reader is met

* "Proceedings of Her Majesty's Naval Forces at Canton."

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by a most painful impression that Sir John is confidentially confessing to Mr Consul Parkes something or other which he describes as unknown to the Chinese, but which (the natural inference is) would have bettered the case of Yeh, had it been known to him. Precisely at this point it is that one of two fatal blunders committed by Lord Derby, in abstracting the sum of the Canton reports, has misled all who relied on his authority. At p. 10 of the Blue-book, Sir John Bowring says: [Hong-Kong, October 11.]—"It appears, on examination, that the Arrow had no right to hoist the British flag; the license to do so expired on the 27th of September"—[thirteen days before the Chinese outrage]. And Sir John then goes on to say:—"*But the Chinese had no knowledge of the expiry of the license.*"* Im-

* "*Expiry of the License:*"—It is remarkable enough that Lord Clarendon, whose long practice in the art of reading state-papers must have qualified him so eminently for moving with rapidity and with steadiness amongst the accumulated documents of Hong-Kong, might almost seem to have foreseen the blunder of Lord Derby. Writing from the Foreign Office on December 10, 1856, and reviewing all the papers connected with the Arrow that could then have reached him by the overland mail, coming down to October 15, Lord Clarendon says, that he has consulted the law-officer of the Crown, and has come to the conclusion that this act of the Chinese authorities constitutes an infraction of Art. IX. of the Supplementary Treaty. Yet, whilst saying

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mediately, with rash haste, Lord Derby presumes the logic of the case to stand thus:—"Between ourselves," he supposes Sir John to say, "you and I, Mr Consul Parkes, are quite in the wrong box. If the Chinese knew all, we shouldn't have a leg to stand on. But luckily they *don't* know all. So let us keep our own counsel." Strange that Lord Derby *could* have ascribed such a meaning to any man in his senses that was not personating the character of a stage-villain. What Sir John wishes to say is this—that, as a matter of fact, there really *was* an irregularity (as it hap-

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this, he adds, as part of the very same despatch, pretty nearly that very identical remark of Sir J. Bowring, which Lord Derby fancies to be nothing less than a confidential retractation of the whole charge against the Chinese. Here are Lord Clarendon's words:—"The expiration of the Arrow's sailing license on September 27, previous to her seizure, does not appear to have been known to the Chinese authorities." What then? Does he mean that this might ultimately weaken our claim for reparation, as giving us a present and momentary advantage which would melt away as the truth became gradually more apparent? Not at all. So far from this, he means to say that Yeh does not appear to have known the one sole fact, which, *if* known, might, under an erroneous construction, have seemed to authorise, or colourably to palliate his outrage; and Lord Clarendon, it must be remembered, is not giving this opinion under any suspicion of partisanship, as would have been the case had he been speaking in the House of Lords, but under the most solemn seal of public duty, as a minister of state writing confidentially to responsible agents.

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penned) in the case of the Arrow; but that this irregularity could be of no avail to Yeh as an excuse for the outrage, since it was entirely unknown to Yeh. *Being* unknown, therefore, it was immaterial whether the supposed irregularity had existed or not. However, Sir John had scarcely written his letter before he became aware that there had really been no irregularity at all. The sailing license had indeed lapsed, but under circumstances which legally sustained its continued validity until the vessel should reach the port at which the license could be renewed. Sir John had made a mistake; but such a mistake as could lend no countenance to Yeh. The brief logic of the case, as understood by Lord Derby, is—"*Yeh does not know the truth, therefore let us keep him in the dark.*" But the true logic, in Sir John's meaning, was—"*Yeh does not know the truth, therefore let him not presume to plead it as the ground of his violence.*" Suppose that the Arrow *had* been, by oversight, stripped in part of her particular privileges, was it from this unguarded point—was it from this heel of Achilles—that the villain Yeh would have sought to steal his advantage? Not at all. In such a case, by moving under the sanction of a treaty, he would

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altogether have missed his triumph. Those persons totally misconceive the governor's purpose who impute to him a special pleader's subtlety in construing severely the terms on which we grant indulgences and dispensations. Yeh was not in search of a case where he really might find us trespassing a little to the right or left; on the contrary—and in the very broadest sense on the contrary—he sought for a case in which our right was clear and unequivocal. Else, if our right had been doubtful, *his* triumph would have been doubtful in trampling on it. But how, then, did Yeh purpose to give any even colourable or momentary air of equity to his outrage? Simply by drawing upon the old infamous times for precedents of violence, which the Treaty of 1842, and the Supplementary Treaty, had for ever abolished. Before the war of 1841 and 1842, the unlimited despot who sat in Canton arrested whom, and when and how, he pleased. In this affair of the Arrow, the old obsolete system was suddenly revived. The pretence was, that amongst the crew of the Arrow were two men who had once been pirates. But such a pretence, whether true or false, was no longer valid. Neither we nor the Chinese were left at liberty in future to

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rebels did immediately take advantage of the troubles at Canton—not in any form of hostility to the British; on the contrary, in the very humblest attitude of suppliants. They pretended to connect themselves with the Tae-pings, simply on the conceit that we, being at feud with the imperial authority, must naturally seek alliance with all people in the same predicament. But we had some years ago, in the time of Sir George Bonham, had very unsatisfactory interviews with the Tae-pings, and the pretended brother of Jesus Christ. We had found them weak, cruel, without systematic policy, and altogether as incomprehensibly arrogant as the reigning family. These new pretenders, however, were not even Tae-pings. Even as "rebels" they were spurious. Nor was there any appearance that they were at all better than a *swell-mob*. The ludicrous position of these pretended "rebels," whom Lord Derby represents as having suddenly joined the Imperialists against *us*, is, that, on being questioned with regard to the grounds and objects of their rebellion, they could not even assign the person against whom, or in support of whom, they were rebelling. Where, in our English slang, "these leaders hung out," or in what camps they proposed

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to establish head-quarters, were insoluble questions. Generally, it was collected, that wherever a man could be indicated as having probably ten dollars in his purse, against that man they were prepared to "rebel." *

Although the absurdity and drollery of the case, and the extreme disproportion between

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* "*Prepared to rebel:*"—It deserves notice, however, that in China there is a *permanent* opening for rebels—both word and thing—in the condition of society. Besides the "Christian" rebels—the formidable Tae-pings—who have kept open for half-a-dozen years the cause of insurrection in the interior (sometimes in the very centre) of the empire, there has always been a smouldering rebellion—first, amongst the *triads;* secondly, amongst the eastern *maritime* populations, tainted with the leaven of piracy, and scornfully disaffected to the supreme government, as too notoriously not able to protect them; thirdly, amongst an old indigenous race of mountaineers, called the *Meaoutsee* (whether Chinese originally by blood is unknown), who having long since found out the trick of cudgelling the Chinese, are not likely to unlearn it amongst the advantageous positions of their native hills and mountain-passes. John Chinaman from the plains below is continually opening a new chapter of the eternal row with these people; which being reported to Peking, in the old mendacious fashion, and discounted accordingly by the Emperor, do not leave any large balance of victory to receive at the end of the year: no burden arises for the Peking memory. During our own war with the Chinese of 1841–2, a very natural fancy occurred to the Cabinet of Peking—namely, to hire these old enemies in the stage character of new friends. Fighting so well as nuisances, why not as allies? But unhappily the plan failed. Ranged against the British, the stout mountaineers "went the way of all flesh."

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the grave realities of our official experience at Canton, and the romantic legends of Her Majesty's Opposition, have the effect of drawing off the lightning of the national displeasure from the House of Lords, yet not the less it cannot be disguised that the accrediting of such nursery fables by dignified leaders and accomplished statesmen must operate, through many channels, injuriously upon the character of our Senate, and would, were not such a result intercepted by the savage duncery of Chinese mandarins, make us a by-word for credulity in the councils of Canton. To be objects of derision and banter to a nation of what, in old English, would have been styled *Half-wits!* —Heavens! what a destiny! In a memorable little poem of Donne's, entitled the "Curse," which perhaps offers the most absolute *chef-d'œuvre* extant of condensation as to thinking and expression, one massy line is this:—

"May he be scorn'd by one whom all else scorn!"

Such an imprecation would assuredly be realised for any of our senators whom Hansard might transfer in a comprehensible form to the make-believe *literati* of China. It should be remembered by our senators that "*Nescit vox missa reverti;*" or else centuries hence the

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mortified descendants of distinguished leaders may read with astonishment the monstrous memorials of ancestral credulity.

At p. 118 of the Blue-book occurs the first notice of the pretended rebels. In Sir J. Bowring's letter, printed partially on this page, and dated November 25, 1856, it is first of all noticed that Yeh, amongst his other hateful falsehoods, was "industriously circulating" that we, the British, are "in league with the rebel forces." At p. 119 occurs the second notice:—On December 12, 1856, Sir J. Bowring makes the following entry into his journal meant for Lord Clarendon:—"I have received from Mr Secretary Wade a report (dated yesterday) to the effect that, in consequence of the withdrawal" (meaning by Mr Governor Yeh) "of the troops from the open country* for the defence of Canton,—crowds of bandits, calling themselves *rebels*, have devastated large districts, committing every sort of violence and excess." It is indeed most strange that the Imperial Commissioner should not have

* His Excellency in his hurry is excusably unprecise: what Sir John means, is the withdrawal into the city of Canton, so as to be available against the British, of the troops appointed to the general defence of the vast province bearing the same name.

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foreseen how certainly his rash quarrel with the treaty-powers would encourage movements such as those now described, and imperil the imperial authority, *probably beyond redemption.* These were counterfeit *rebels,* and others on the sea, of the same lawless character, who made advances to us, seeking shelter under our power, and the benefit of our countenance, aided by their most ambiguous name of *rebels.* Had these rebels been less determinately cruel, and had they been willing to renounce their mysterious pretensions to some ridiculous superiority, which Sir G. Bonham, in his sole conference with their chiefs, treated, as usual, with nothing of the requisite disdain, it was at one time (say four years ago) really becoming a question whether it might not be advisable to form a provisional alliance with *them,* rather than continue our support to the mouldering family at present on the throne. In the wickedness of wholesale murder the two factions are exactly on a level; and with our aid either party would be sure of a triumph. It happens, however, that, in fact, we never *did* make any overture of alliance. Never once, by the slightest expression of approval or collusion, have we given countenance or ground of hope to the Tae-pings; far less to

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the sham rebels, and, no doubt, as we had made a treaty with the reigning house, this line of policy (due to no merits of that house) is, upon the whole, the most becoming to our position.

At this moment we see the extraordinary spectacle in the English capital of a large party, composed of distinguished Englishmen, labouring to establish a charge of murder and multiplied incendiarism against their own compatriots in the East; and for no other purpose than that of reaching one obnoxious leader, Sir John Bowring, we see them involving in the charge a gallant sailor, whose reputation, if tainted by shadows of doubt, touches the interests of the British navy. On the other side, ranged against Sir John and the admiral, we behold a real and undoubted murderer, the Governor of Canton, whom any coroner's inquest in England would assuredly find guilty of murder; not as having by military means killed an English subject acting against him in open combat, but as having by two separate bribes*

* "*Two separate bribes:*"—Yeh, the governor, first of all, offered by proclamation, upon the 27th of October, the sum of thirty dollars for the head of every Englishman; and subsequently a private association of persons in Canton, whom we dignify with the titles of "gentry" and "literati," offered a se-

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encouraged and suborned murderers. Three* men have already been assailed under this incitement. One, a Portuguese in the English naval service, was saved (though wounded) by the aid which answered *critically* to his call. But early in the quarrel two others, both Englishmen, perished. Charles Bennet was seized suddenly by a crowd, whom he had approached without distrust, and was instantly decapitated. The other, too sure of the fate awaiting him, leaped into the sea, as a gentler and nobler enemy that neither tempted nor betrayed, and *he* died in solitary quiet.

Now, let us pause for a moment and consider. There have been cases, past all numbering, of men individually or in factions setting prices on the heads of their rivals, whom they chose or had reason to denounce as their enemies. History rings with such cases. But

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cond bribe, larger by more than one-half—namely, thirty-three taels. A tael is precisely the old English *noble*, or 6s. 8d.; whence comes our ordinary law-solicitor's fee. Three taels, therefore, at the ordinary exchange, make one pound sterling. Consequently, Yeh's price for an English head is about six pounds or guineas; but the literati are more liberal, and offer pretty nearly to a fraction ten guineas.

* Since then the crew and passengers of the Thistle steamer, eleven in number, and others.

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these were always the cases—or if excused, it was because they were presumed to be the cases—of men contending for some great prize, generally a crown, whose existence and security had become reciprocally incompatible. One or other, it was felt, must perish; and it was the supreme authority of self-preservation which conferred the right of inflicting death upon the baffled competitor. Even these were viewed oftentimes by all parties as afflicting necessities, which under that name only could be reconciled to human feelings. Turn from such conflicts, so natural and so deeply palliated, to the hellish atrocity of this inhuman murderer at Canton. What, let us ask briefly, had been his provocation? And supposing that he might, in his meagre faculty of judgment, have misconceived his own rights and position, or read in a false sense the steps taken by Sir J. Bowring and the British admiral, what men are those whom he has selected for the victims of his vengeance! He could scarcely hope that his pretended retaliation should alight upon the leaders of the British; and for all the rest, *they* were poor men without power, the very humblest in kind or in degree for disputing the orders of their superiors. But what was the provocation? It is

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worth the reader's while to follow the explanation as it unfolds itself to any one who reviews the whole connection and relations between the Governor of Canton and the controllers of the British interests. Let us briefly sketch it. The war in 1841–2, which followed close upon the heels of the abominable oppressions exercised by Commissioner Lin, and of his lawless confiscations, did not unseal the eyes of the Chinese Government—nothing on this side the grave could do *that*—but it left the whole aristocratic part of the nation lost in horror, astonishment, and confusion. For us also it brought strange light and revolutionary views upon the true available resources of China. The wretched Government of Peking had neither men nor money, and entirely through its own vices of administration. We ourselves never brought above 9000 infantry into the field, no cavalry (which, in some instances, would have been worth its weight in gold), and at the utmost 3000 miscellaneous reserves, artillery, marines, sailors, &c. The Chinese, by a great effort, sometimes brought five men to our two; though never in one instance were they able to make good their ground, although often aided by the advantage of lofty walls, which our men had

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to scale. Pretty nearly the greatest number that they were able to manœuvre on one field against us ran up to 17,000 or 18,000. Think, reader, with astonishment (but with horror, when you consider the cause) of this awful disproportion to the reputed population of this vast empire. Grant, as readily one *may* grant, that this population is hyperbolically exaggerated, still there is ground for assuming 80,000,000, or one-fifth part of the ridiculous 400,000,000, which some writers assume; and even on this diminished scale you have a population larger perhaps by 14,000,000, certainly by 10,000,000, than that of martial Russia. It is a fact in the highest degree probable, that neither Circassia nor Algerine Arabia has brought into the field forces numerically smaller than this monstrous China, whose area is hard upon 1,300,000 square English miles — *i. e.*, about eleven times larger* than the Britannic Isles. Inconceivable, therefore, is the martial poverty of China; and even yet the worst has not been said. Of the ridiculously small armies produced by

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* "*Eleven times larger:*"—Confining the estimate, of course, to China Proper; else China beyond the Wall counts a total of 3,000,000 square English miles.

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China, only the Tartar section displayed any true martial qualities; and one fact which demonstrates the paucity of this meritorious section is, that on the approach of the final panic* it was found necessary to summon 5000 of these Tartars from Thibet, and other extra-mural regions, as we learn from the French

* This panic was in itself a most memorable and scenical display; perhaps the finest as a poetic vision that homely China has ever witnessed; for in China there is no magnificence of any sort. Since the siege of Jerusalem, there has been nothing like the terror-stricken packing up of the court at Peking, after it became known that the English army occupied the head of the imperial canal. Had our horse-guards been present at head-quarters, we should have caught and amputated more bushels of pigtails than Hannibal of equestrian gold rings at Cannæ. But the comedy of the case really rises to the sublime, when the fact transpires, that what between the knavery and the panic of the court, there disappeared from the treasure-chests of the Emperor, during the headlong process of packing up, 3,000,000 of money; not *taels* observe, 3,000,000 of which would unhappily make only 1,000,000 of sovereigns; but three downright sterling millions. What was to be done? Horror turned the Emperor's head grass-green in one night. But what good would that do? Verdant hair would not bring back the departed money. Nothing would bring it back. Hitherto there had been no national debt in China: but from this night forward there was. Taoukwang, first and last, ordained that the 3,000,000 should be funded, and stand as a debt against the names to the thousandth generation of those who should have guarded the money, but certainly did *not*, and probably stole it. Meantime the Emperor could not cash a bill for £10; and in his journey to Mantchoo Tartary, had it held, he must have gone upon tick with his postilions: which might have brought his green hair with sorrow to the grave.

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missionaries, MM. Huc and Gabet. For the very last reinforcement, on which the Mantchoo throne was likely to depend, a summons was requisite to regions beyond the Wall at distances of one, two, and even three thousand miles!

In 1842 the war had come to an end, through the absolute exhaustion of the Chinese in every possible resource. Men, money, munitions of war, even provisions locally, all were drained. Three great aggravations of the case had arisen almost simultaneously: the Emperor had incautiously suffered himself, in a sudden paroxysm of rabid fury against the British, to say, "Spare no cost in *exterminating*" (such was his uniform word) "the profligate barbarians;" upon which the two maritime provinces of Chekeang and Fokien took him at his word, in a few months had run up an account of 11,000,000 taels (three taels to £1), which in the spring of 1842 called for instant liquidation; and, meantime (which was the most dismal feature of the case), nothing whatever had the provinces to show in return for such a fearful expenditure, except indeed a few shameless romances of Bobadil victories, which even the stolid Emperor now began to see through as mockeries; whilst

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daily it became more certain that four-fifths of the 11,000,000 had been embezzled by the mandarins. Here was one exasperation of the public calamity. A second was—that whilst the English at Chusan and Koolangsoo lived generally on the very best terms with the inhabitants, never pillaged them, and never imposed fines or pecuniary contributions upon them, the pauper part of the native population (a very numerous part in many provinces of China) followed our army like carrion crows, blackening the whole face of the land as they settled upon the derelict property, to which unavoidably our victorious troops had laid open the road. Always the pillagers of China were the Chinese. A third aggravation of the ruin was, that vast floods were abroad, in many cases destroying the crops. In our own country, comparatively so limited, at a certain critical part of the autumn, it is often said that unseasonable weather makes a difference to the nation of £1,000,000 sterling in each successive period of twenty-four hours; in China, where there is so much less of vicarious dependence upon animal diet, it may be guessed in how vast an excess of range must operate any derangement of the cereal crops. Such was the misery which, amidst infinite gnash-

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ing of teeth, compelled the Emperor to make a hasty and humiliating peace. The misery of this period might be received as a solemn foretaste of deeper woes awaiting this wicked prince and nation in coming times. It needs no spirit of prophecy to denounce this: such tempers as govern those who are here concerned carry with them to a certainty their own fearful chastisements, when brought (as now at last they are) upon a wider stage of action, and forced into daylight.

Peace, then, was made; and peace, to the deadly mortification of the Chinese Court, was followed by a treaty. We were not going to let the impression of our victories exhale; we insisted, therefore, on such results from our martial successes as our experience had then taught us to be requisite; but unhappily, such is our general spirit of moderation in dealing with those who cannot appreciate moderation, we demanded far too little, as now we find. And even of that little we have allowed the Chinese fraudulently to keep back all that displeased the mobs in great cities.

The peace, therefore, and the treaty were finished; and things should have settled back, it was fancied, into their old grooves at Canton. Heavens! what a mistake! Not until

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all parties resumed their old habits at the southernmost point of China, did any of them realise experimentally the prodigious revolution. There—where heretofore the haughty ruler of Canton issued his superb ukase, "Go, and he goeth—do this, and he doeth it,"—now walked, in conscious independence and admitted equality, a British plenipotentiary, having rights of his own, and knowing how to maintain them. Instead of flying for a few hours' shelter from Chinese wrath to poor trembling Macao, this plenipotentiary had now a home and a flag that nobody could violate with impunity. Hong-Kong was, for itself, little better than a rock; but, which was a point of more importance to us, the harbour attached to that rock was worthy of England. In a map of China what a pin's-point is Hong-Kong! And yet, through all that vast empire, there is not one refuge so impregnable to the whole embattled Orient.

Now, then, exactly in proportion as we had become almost as invulnerable as the air to the idle weapons of the governor, more frantic grew his morbid craving for wounding us. But how? Nothing was left to him but a crime. To violate our flag—that was the only way in which he could sting. But it was a way in

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which he could not sting twice. Measures of repression and measures of chastisement followed instantly. It was felt most justly by all the official people on the spot that the spirit of aggression was nursed by the submission, on our part, to exclusion from free access to Canton—this being at once a traditional insult to ourselves, and a flagrant violation of four separate treaties. All the defences, therefore, of Canton, one after another, were destroyed; and not merely in their fittings and immediate capacity for service, as had too often been tolerated before: they were now mined and blown up, so as to leave them heaps of ruins. It had been a trial of strength between ourselves and Yeh. He had declared that we should not enter Canton: we had replied that we would. Accordingly, Admiral Seymour and the plenipotentiary not only walked over the ruined defences into that city, but into the residence (Yamun) of Yeh, sat down on Yeh's sofas, and redeemed their vow. Mere frenzy seems then to have taken possession of Yeh; he looked round for some weapon of retaliation, but could find none—none that was tolerated by the usages of any nation raised above savagery. Then it was—and in an evil hour for himself, if we prove faithful to our duty

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—that Yeh dispersed everywhere his offers of blood-money to murderers. Yet, in Mr Cobden's eyes, Yeh is an injured man. Now, on the other side, hear Admiral Seymour's vigilant interposition on behalf of the Cantonese. In the very midst of the excitement at the moment of storming the breach in the Canton wall, on the morning of November 29, the admiral took the following precautions:—"Before the landing took place, I assembled the officers, and urgently impressed upon them (as I had previously done by written orders) the necessity of restraining the men from molesting the persons and property of the inhabitants, confining warlike operations against the troops only; and I have pleasure in bearing testimony to the forbearance of the seamen and marines."

Again, on the capture of the Bogue and Anunghoy Forts, mounting jointly 410 guns, the dastardly mandarins in command had secured boats for their own escape, but had left their followers unprovided for. Upon this the several Chinese garrisons had rushed into the water, as their sole resource against our victorious stormers. What course, in these circumstances, did the admiral adopt? He declined even to make prisoners of the men (a

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generosity perhaps indiscreet, considering the pressure everywhere upon the Chinese Government for troops); and, without even amputating the tails of the men, a measure sometimes adopted by us in 1842 to braver men than the Chinese—namely, to the Tartar troops—the admiral most kindly took them all on board, and put them ashore uninjured. In many other cases, the anxious care of this admiral —whom Mr Cobden involves in the same reproaches as the plenipotentiary—was to stand between the Chinese and all injury that it was possible to avoid, though many of these Chinese were those very Cantonese who had converted their city into a den of murder. And the return for this forbearance is, that secret murderers are hired by Yeh, not merely against soldiers and marines, indicated by their uniforms, but against non-combatants utterly disconnected from the diplomatic interests at issue, or the warlike service ministerial to those interests. Mr Cobden will probably find reason hereafter to repent of his motion as the worst day's work he ever accomplished; and the more so because, first, in order to protect the very existence of the British in China, it will be indispensable to pursue the same *virtual* policy as that of Sir J. Bowring, what-

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ever change may be made in names or forms; secondly, because our supreme Government at home is already committed to this policy, by the formal approbation given to the whole of the warlike proceedings* against Canton, under the official seal of Lord Clarendon (see his Letter to the Lords of the Admiralty in reference to Sir M. Seymour).

Now let us come to the *practical* suggestions which the past, in connection with the known knavery of the Chinese administration through all its ranks and local subdivisions, imperatively prescribes.

First, as to an appeal, which is talked of generally, to the Emperor at Peking. Nothing will come of this—nothing but evil, if it is managed as hitherto it has been. Here it is,

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* "*Warlike proceedings:*"—But not, therefore, to any bombardment of Canton, meaning the dwelling-houses and shops of that city, which is a pure fiction of the Cobdenites. No bombardment has yet taken place, but one directed against the cincture of walls around Canton—walls which are surmounted or surmountable with guns. But assume even that a general bombardment of the city *had* been found necessary, for the mastering of its foolish governor's obstinacy, what more would *that* have been than we have many times adopted against far more meritorious places, or than we had actually made final preparations to carry out against this very Canton in the year 1841, as the one sole available resource for extorting a most equitable indemnity to our injured merchants.

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and perhaps here only, that Sir J. Bowring has failed in his duty. We make a treaty with this Emperor, or at least with his father. Finding it insufficient, we make four treaties —one in 1842, one in 1843, a third in 1846, and a final one in 1847. Every one of these in succession has recognised our right to move freely in and out of Canton. But always we have permitted the governor for the time to set aside this right, upon an assurance that the obstacle lay in the irritable temper of the mob; that this mob could not be controlled for the present; but that, in some mysterious way (never explained), at an indefinite period in futurity, the requisite subordination would probably be developed. Upon this, at various times, appeals have been presented to the Emperor (not the Emperor under whom the treaties were extorted, but the present Emperor, his son); and uniformly these appeals have taken the form of petitions, to which uniformly the Peking reply has been by one insolent *No, sans* phrase. Now what child's play is this! We make a treaty; we begin by permitting the public officers to evade the fulfilment of it, without so much as a plausible pretext. The mob is not satisfied: that is the curt diplomatic reply; and mighty thrones

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are instructed to await the pleasure (now through fourteen years) of a vile murdering populace for the concession of their primary rights. A treaty has been obtained, at the cost of a war, and therefore of many thousand lives; and then we send a humble petition to the beaten prince that he will graciously fulfil the terms of this treaty. Sir J. Bowring has been blameable in this; but in the very opposite direction to that indicated by Mr Cobden. Briefly, then, the national voice cries loudly, "No more petitions to Peking!" Once for all, a stern summons to the fulfilment of the Chinese undertakings. Every year the smarting of the wounds inflicted by the war is cooling down, the terror is departing; and *a new war will become necessary*, which would have been made unnecessary by the simple course of building on the terrors of the first war. It cannot be denied by the whole body of our official people—consuls, plenipotentiaries, &c. —that they have in this point acted foolishly —namely, that whenever the swindling commissioners of the Quantung province or city have been called on to assign the plea under which they claim further indulgence, they have always replied, "*Oh, the mob!*" without further comment, neither showing through what

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channel the mob exercised any present influence, nor by what unspeakable agency it was pretended that the friends of this mob looked reasonably for its amendment. We have, in short, allowed ourselves to be trifled with, and to furnish a standing jest to all the diplomatic people of China.

Secondly, next as to a resident ambassador of high rank in Peking. We know not what we ask. The thing has been amply tried. As great a power as ourselves, though moulded on a different model—the mighty Court of St Petersburg—tried this scheme with much patience, and swallowed affronts that would have injured the prestige of the Czar, had they been reported through Europe. But all came to nothing, through the insurmountable chicanery of the highest Chinese officers, and through the inhuman insolence of the court. It is true the Russian envoy was not of the very highest rank; and that was a dismal oversight of the Czar. But possibly the Czar shrank from compromising his own grandeur in the person of a higher representative. However, the envoy was high enough to be held presentable at court, and was invited to hunting-parties. But the mortifications and affronts put upon him passed all count and valuation.

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Soldiers were quartered in his house, and stationed at his gate, to examine, by inquisitorial (often tormenting) modes, what might be the business of every visiter. Sometimes they horsewhipped these visiters for presuming to come at all, on any errand whatever. Sometimes they hustled the visiter violently. Sometimes (indeed always, as regarded their true purposes) they insisted on large money bribes. In short, they made the envoy weary of his existence. The same infamous trick so ignoble and scoundrelish, was practised upon the Russian as upon the British ambassador. The Emperor, through pure insolence, insisted on feeding the embassy. Well, this was brutal; but, if the embassy really *were* fed, the main end was answered. But oftentimes the supply of provisions was utterly neglected. On the one hand, it was construed into an affront to the Emperor if his guests purchased provisions—it was even dangerous to do so under so capricious a despotism; and yet, on the other hand, if provisions were *not* purchased, frequently the servants suffered absolute starvation. In the Russian case the Chinese agent laid down the imperial allowance on the ground of the courtyard; nor was the service ever much improved. And in the

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case of Lord Amherst, after a fatiguing day's travel, the embassy was introduced to a court, in which was fixed a table bearing a dish of broken meat, such as in England, would be offered to itinerant beggars; and for all the beverage that waited upon this sumptuous repast, the gentlemen were referred to a number of horse-buckets filled with water. On remonstrating—for it was too evident that an indignity was designed—the mandarin in attendance wilfully heightened the affront by pleading, with mock humility, that the horse-buckets were introduced on the special assurance that such was the usage of our country. The main object, meantime, of this puerile insult was altogether baffled, since nobody, but a Chinese servant or two, condescended to touch anything. It was a most unfortunate arrangement for the Russian envoy that he was too closely connected with the commercial business of his countrymen. Upon this the Chinese, as usual, took occasion to build every form of insult. *They* did not condescend to matters of trade; and really, if the Russians wanted to be protected, they must not apply on such trifles to great men. A most seasonable opening occurred for a retort to the Russian minister; and, perilous as it was to play with

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such sneers, the temptation to do so was too strong for human patience. It happened that, at the very moment when the poor Russian dealers began to bring forward for sale a vast mass of Siberian furs, the Emperor suddenly forestalled and ruined their trade by coming down upon the market with a matter of 20,000 similar furs from the region of the river Amour. Upon this the envoy observed, with bitter irony, that it made him truly happy—oh, it was delightful!—to find that his Chinese Majesty had seen the error of his opinions, and was at length going to consecrate commerce by entering "into business himself" in the wholesale line as a furrier. The great mandarins were all taken aback; they coloured, looked very angry, and then very foolish. "It wasn't to be imagined," they said, "that his Celestial Majesty cared about making gain; oh no! He only wanted to ——" "Make a little profit," said the Russian, filling up the blank.

Thirdly, it is probable, therefore, that our Government, if they were to read and muse a little on the journal of the Russian envoy,* the

* M. De Lange. He was left by M. De Ismaeloff, and was personally known to the Scottish traveller, Bell of Antermony. Bell was a favourite and an agent of the Czar Peter the Great; and after the Czar's death he reprinted De Lange's Record as a

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one solitary memorial of diplomatic residence amongst this odious people, will think twice before they propose to any British nobleman a service at once so degrading and so perilous. There is no exaggeration in saying *perilous*. Our own experience furnishes sufficient vouchers. Lord Amherst in 1816, although disposed individually to make far too serious concessions to the ridiculous claims of this savage court, although he submitted (which surely was almost a criminal act) to be advertised on the outside of the boats conveying himself and suite, as "the English tribute-bearer," and was even inclined to perform the *ko-tou*, had he not been recalled to nobler sentiments by Sir George Staunton (one of his two associates in the legatine functions), yet could not, by all his obsequious overtures, so long as he retained any reserve of manly self-respect, secure the decencies of civility from a court which he had visited at the cost of a 25,000-mile voyage.* He was driven back with contumely and vio-

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supplement to his own Travels. But it had been printed previously in a separate form, and somewhat differently in parts, at the Hague, if not at Stockholm. Some seventy years after this abortive residence of De Lange, the Russians made another effort, of which no memorial has been printed.

* 25,000-*mile voyage*:—*i. e.*, outward and homeward.

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lence on the very morning of reaching the Emperor's palace; no resting time allowed after an exhausting journey, pursued most unnecessarily the whole night long; mobs of ruffians were allowed to rush into the room where he was seeking a moment's repose, and to treat *him*, the representative of the British Majesty, together with his suite, as a show of wild beasts. With such headlong fury was Lord Amherst ordered off, that he himself and his experienced assessors, knowing the capricious violence of this besotted despotism, did seriously regard it as no impossible catastrophe, that the whole embassy might be summarily put to death. Lord Amherst's courage in persisting, unterrified, redeems his error as to the *ko-tou*. It is probable enough that, but for one refrigerating suggestion (namely, the close proximity of our vast Indian Empire), Lord Amherst and his train would really have been sacrificed to the brute arrogance of China. England was far off, but Hindostan was near; and it appears, by the ridiculous collections of Lin, in 50 vols. 4to, that circuitously through Thibet some nursery tales had reached Peking of our Indian conquests, and in particular of our conflict with Nepaul. But so preposterously were the relations and proportions of

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all objects distorted, that Lin (who may pass for a fair representative of the Chinese *literati*) conceived our main Indian Empire to be called London, and lying somewhere near to the Himalayas.

Such was the wrath of Taoukwang and his council; and *so* was it probably averted. Fear of the phantom London on the Ganges was too probably what saved Lord Amherst's head. Now, when men came to read of this danger threatened, and of these indignities suffered, murmurs arose amongst the intelligent that the Government at home should have exposed a band of faithful servants and the honour of the national name to such useless humiliations. Nothing at all was gained by the mission: at no time was there a prospect of gaining anything; but there was a very serious risk, through many weeks, of a tragedy that would have cost us an extra war. Let us keep *that* in mind—that a war stands as the issue and arbitrement of future negotiations with China not wisely managed; and *wisely* means above all other things so managed as to allow no effect whatever to these pretensions of China which all men of sense or feeling no longer mention without disgust. One or two of these hateful pretensions shall be noticed

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immediately; but meantime let us pause for a moment to remark upon the new form which our negotiations are going to assume. Lord Granville has announced that France and the United States will now join us in our new diplomacy, and give weight to our demands. Even this arrangement marks on the part of our Government a non-acquaintance with the Chinese nature and condition of culture. These two advantages we have a chance of drawing from the association of the two nations in our overtures, that, by lightening the cost, they will improve the quality of our interventions, and that each of them is more irritably jealous of even shadows that may sully the bright disk of their national honour than we are; and it is to their credit, in Shakspere's words,

"Greatly to find quarrel in a straw,"

wherever a hostile purpose is on the watch to found future assumptions and insolent advantages upon what seemed to be accident, and was therefore neglected as such. In this direction we shall find useful allies in these great nations, that will not so lightly make rash concessions as we have done. But this is the least part of what our Government is expecting. They fancy that the great authority, the au-

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thentic prestige, of two leading peoples in Christendom will have its natural weight even with a silly oriental nation. There are, perhaps, one or two oriental nations—for instance, the Burmese—who seem to have a natural aptitude for conforming their apprehensions to the new social phenomena introduced to them by European civilisation; but in the Chinese this power is stifled in its earliest stages by the enormity of their self-conceit. In any case they would allow no weight to foreign nations, even if made acquainted with their high pretensions. But they are *not* acquainted with the elements of those pretensions. Having no knowledge of geography, none of history, and, above all, none of civilisation and its marvels, how or when should they learn, for instance, to respect the splendour of France? All that they know of France is, that two centuries ago some unintelligible missionaries introduced an obscure doctrine into China, at one time protected by the caprice of this or that prince, at another persecuted by the cruelty of his successor. At the time of our war with China, some of the provincial governors, from pure childishness, were in hopes that by a mere request they could induce some of the barbarian na-

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tions to attack the British.* One of these governors undertook to coax the French by flattery into this belligerent humour. But how? The point on which he opened his flattery was, that *his* sovereigns, the Kings of France, were truly meritorious; for that in all generations they had been "submissive" and "obedient" to the great Emperor of China, and had never swerved from their "duty." This was the highest form of merit which his Chinese imagination could admit, and the sole bait with which the poor fool angled for a French alliance.

Recurring, then, to those hateful pretensions of superiority, surely the nation may expect that, if the new negotiators are sent to Peking, they will not (as heretofore) be consigned in travelling to the insolent authority of the Chinese, ordered to stop at this point or that, furnished with insulting supplies on one day, with none at all on the next, and forbidden to purchase provisions for themselves out of delicacy to a prince who finds no indelicacy in suffering his guests to starve. But this is a trifle

* A ludicrous incident occurred under this blunder at Amoy: an American frigate, on coming into the harbour, saluted our shipping; on which the Chinese notified by expresses that the barbarians were now hard at work against each other.

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by comparison with other arrogances of the Chinese; and these ought surely to be met by a preliminary letter from the associated nations, and not left as subjects for a mere remonstrance from the ambassadors. In substance something like this should surely be sent forward beforehand:—

That whilst the Three Powers allied for the purposes of this negotiation approach his Chinese Majesty with respect for the station which he occupies, at the same time they feel bound to protest against the offensive terms in which his Chinese Majesty has always claimed some imaginary superiority. More especially they must notice with displeasure the secret pretension which his Chinese Majesty seems to assume of levying some paramount allegiance from their subjects. This pretension will no longer be endured. It will not be tolerated in future that his majesty should describe the British, French, or Americans as "*rebels*," or as "repenting," and "returning to their duty," when making peace with him. Even as regards his more general claim of superiority, the Allied Powers are unable to understand on what his majesty builds. If on population, as regards the amount numerically, China has not established her pretensions; whilst, as regards its *quality*, it is sufficient to refer his

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Chinese Majesty to the result of his past military experience. It is possible that his Chinese Majesty founds upon *extent* of dominions; and in that case he is likely to remain under his delusion, so long as he is guided by the maps and geographical works of his own subjects. It is enough to say that the American United States possess a territory larger than the Chinese, even counting China beyond the Wall. This total area of China may amount to 3,000,000 of square English miles. But the Queen of Great Britain possesses a territory of 7,000,000, if her American and Australian states are included, and without counting the vast British territory in Hindostan; whilst, as regards China within the Wall, it is pretty nearly on a level with the British possessions in India—close neighbours to his Chinese Majesty—each counting nearly 1,300,000 square English miles. The Three Powers announce, finally, that they will no longer tolerate the practice of setting prices upon the heads of their subjects by Chinese governors, but will, after this notice, hang all such savage traffickers in blood whenever they may happen to be captured.

* * * * *

A dreadful echo lingers on the air from our past dealings with the Chinese, an echo from

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the cry of innocent blood shed many years ago by us British adulterating wickedly with Chinese wickedness. Not Chinese blood it is that cries from the earth for vengeance, but blood of our own dependant, a poor humble serving man, whom we British were bound to have protected, but whom, in a spirit of timid and sordid servility to Cantonese insolence, we, trembling for our factory menaced by that same wicked mob that even now is too likely to win a triumph over us, and coerced by the agents of the East India Company (always upright and noble in its Indian—always timid and cringing in its Chinese policy), surrendered to the Moloch that demanded him. The case was this:—Always, as against aliens, the Chinese have held the infamous doctrine that the intention, the motive, signifies nothing.* If you, being a foreigner, should, by the bursting of your rifle, most unwillingly cause the death

* Rokh Mirza, a splendid prince, presented to one of the former Chinese Emperors a splendid horse. In China there are no horses that an English farmer's wife, carrying poultry to market, would condescend to mount. Consequently, in China there are no horsemen. The Emperor was no better in this accomplishment than the rest of his subjects. Upon mounting, he was instantly thrown. No anger burns so fiercely as that which is kindled by panic. The Emperor, therefore, I believe, regarded the horse as an assassin, but certainly the ambassadors who brought him; and with great difficulty was prevailed on to spare their lives.

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of a Chinese, you must die. Luckily we have since 1841 cudgelled them out of this hellish doctrine; but such *was* the doctrine up to 1840. Whilst this law prevailed—namely, in 1784—an elderly Portuguese gunner, on board a Chinaman of ours lying close to Whampoa, was *ordered* to fire a salute in honour of the day, which happened to be June 4, the birthday of George III. The case was an extreme one: for the gunner was not firing a musket or a pistol for his own amusement, but a ship's gun under positive orders. It happened, however, that some wretched Chinese was killed. Immediately followed the usual insolent demand for the unfortunate gunner. Some resistance was made; some disputing and wrangling followed: the Mephistopheles governor looking on with a smile of deadly derision: a life was what he wanted, blood was what he howled for: *whose* life, *whose* blood, was nothing to him. Settle it amongst yourselves, said he to the *gentlemen* of the Factory. They *did* settle it: the poor passive gunner, who had been obliged to obey, was foully surrendered; was murdered by the Chinese, under British connivance; and things appeared to fall back into their old track.

Since then our commerce has leaped forward by memorable expansions. I that write

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these words am not superstitious; but this one superstition has ever haunted me—that foundations laid in the blood of innocent men are not likely to prosper.

POSTSCRIPT.

[Written subsequently to the British Government's latest publication of despatches from Hong-Kong, and subsequently to the Chinese intelligence received by way of France.]

First in order of interest is the French despatch published in the "Moniteur de la Flotte." This French news reached England on the 15th of April, between the evening of which day, and the morning of the 16th, it was dispersed all over the island. The amount of the news is this—that the river Peiho (North River), which communicates directly between Peking and the Yellow Sea, had been sacrificed for the present to the fears prevailing in the capital. A river as broad as the Clyde, and having the same commercial value, had been ruined by twenty-two stone dams, leaving a passage to the water, but destroying the navigation. Now, *first*, as to the truth of this intelligence; *secondly*, as to its *value*. As to its *truth*, the main reasons for doubting it, if reported of any wise nation, are wanting in

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the case of the Chinese. It is a suicidal act: but all modes of suicide are regarded with honour in China and in Japan. Self-homicide, self-murder, and the sacrifice of all remote interests to a momentary pique, or to the spiteful counteraction of a rival, all these are admired, *have been* practised by the government, and *are* practised at this moment. When the vast line of maritime territory was ravaged in former generations by piratical invaders, the Emperor, instead of making prudent treaties with the aggressors, simply compelled the population, at the cost of infinite distress, to move inland, so as to leave a zone ten miles broad swept clean of all population. And, at this moment, Admiral Seymour reports a similar attempt to operate upon the waters of Canton, by the submersion of stone-laden junks. Here, indeed, lies the admiral's most cruel anxiety: he is working night and day to keep open the main current with his present narrow means, until reinforcements arrive. Will he succeed? It is too plain that he himself has deep anxieties lest he should not.

Returning for one moment to the *Peiho*, the first question (as to the *truth* of the news) there can, as we see, be no reason for doubting. But, secondly, as to its *value:* what harm will it do? None at all. The French

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journal, the nautical "Moniteur," speaks of Peking as thus placed out of all danger. By no means. Our own advances upon Peking in 1842 were not made by that approach. The great river, the Yang-tse-Keang, laughs at *dams*. It is on THAT quarter—*i. e.*, from the south, and not chiefly from the northern river Peiho—that we can famish Peking into submission. But, *secondly*, there are other and richer cities than Peking: richer in tributes (generally paid in kind). *Thirdly*, the entire imports into the northern half of China from the southern can be swept at one haul into the nets of our cruisers on the Yellow Sea; the Peiho signifying little, except as to a *shorter* passage to the capital for him that commands the sea. But for us, who know the road to Peking by two routes, this Peiho news is a bagatelle; it ruins a Chinese interest, without much affecting any that is British.

But now, having dismissed the French news, lastly for our own:—I confess that it is gloomy. It is always the best policy, as it is peculiarly our British policy, not to deceive ourselves, but to tell the worst. The worst in the present case is this: the Governor of Singapore, it was well known, had, in last November, offered a reinforcement of 500 good troops. This, because the case was not con-

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sidered urgent, had been *then* declined. But *now*—namely, in January of this year—that same aid has been pressingly applied for by the admiral and the plenipotentiary.

Secondly, they have written to Calcutta for an immediate reinforcement of 5000 troops.

Thirdly, they are most anxiously waiting for gun-boats, with which they can do nothing in pursuing the Chinese junks into shallow creeks. It is the old misery of the Crusaders: their heavy cavalry could not pursue the light Arabian horsemen, by whom they were teased all day long, and had no effectual means of retort.

Fourthly, but the worst feature of the case is this: seventy per cent. of the Hong-Kong population are domestic servants; and chiefly from one sole district. The "elders" in this district (*i. e.*, the heads of families) have been coerced by Yeh into ordering home all these servants, who have at the same time been warned, that, to win a welcome from the government, there is but one acceptable offering which they can bring—namely, the heads of their masters. In a colony already distressed and agitated, we may guess the effect of such a notification.

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THE OPIUM EATER ON CHINA.

"Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us."

A PAMPHLET has been published, entitled "China, by THOMAS DE QUINCEY." We are sceptical as to the composition of the pamphlet being that of the well-known writer DE QUINCEY, the opium-eater and economist, because the style is vicious, and the reasoning incoherent; still it may possibly be his production. At page 72 we read these words:—

"From what key note does Athenian tragedy "trace the expansion of its own dark impassioned "music? The spirit of outrage and arrogant self-"assertion—in that temper lurks the original im-"pulse towards wrong; and to that temper the "Greek drama adapts its monitory legends. His "own crime is seen hunting a man through five "generations, and finding him finally in the persons "of his innocent descendants. 'Curses, like young "fowls, come home in the evening to roost.' In "other words, atrocious crime of any man towards "others in his stages of power comes round upon "him with vengeance in the darkening twilight of "his evening. And, accordingly, upon no one "feature of moral temper is the Greek Tragedy "more frequent or earnest in its denunciations, "than upon all expressions of self-glorification, or "of arrogant disparagement applied to others."

This is the text of the pamphlet-writer's preaching. Now for his practice.

On the first page of the preliminary note are these words:—

"One reasonable presumption for inferring a "profounder national conscientiousness, as diffused "among the British people, stands upon record, in "the pages of history, in this memorable fact, "that always at the opening (and at intervals "throughout the progress) of any war, there has "been much and angry discussion amongst us "British as to the equity of its origin, and the "moral reasonableness of its objects. Whereas, "on the Continent, no man ever heard of a ques-"tion being raised, or a faction being embattled, "upon any demur (great or small) as to the moral "grounds of a war."

At page iii of this preliminary note the writer speaks of the British people as—

"Us—the freemen of the earth by emphatic "precedency—us, the leaders of civilisation;"

"Always moving under the impulse of noble "objects;" page 6—

which, it will be admitted, exhausts, apparently, every "expression of self-glorification," and of "arrogant self-assertion."

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Of "arrogant disparagement applied to others," the writer of the pamphlet is full to overflowing. Let us see. We cull the epithets, without any trouble, from the first thirty or forty pages of this curious production.

The Chinese nation, we are told, is a "brutal "enemy"—a "monkey tribe"—a "bloated toad" —a "brutal megatherium." Its ruler is a "wicked emperor," and its government a "govern- "ment universally capable of murder." The Mandarins are "wholesale dealers in murder." The Cantonese are a "ruffian, larcinous, poisoning, "vile population"—"scoundrels"—"bloody crimi- "nals"—"basest of poltroons." Canton itself is a "human shambles." Finally—for we fear these choice flowers of speech are rather disgusting to the taste—the Chinese people generally show "inhuman obstinacy," are "arrogant in proclaiming resistance, and of lowliest cringing," are "scurrilous and "insulting," are "poisoning knaves," "murdering "knaves," "indigenous murderers," "Caliban "—carnal dogs," and, as a climax, a "putrescent "tribe of hole-and-corner assassins."

The Queen of ENGLAND's Prime Minister publicly reviled Commissioner YEH recently as an "insolent barbarian," and we think we have pretty well "traced the expansion of that key "note" in the swelling torrent of arrogant disparagement exemplified in the preceding paragraph.

Are the Chinese barbarians "scurrilous?" Then it is clearly a case of Pot and Kettle. Calm observers, perhaps, will conclude that in this, as in other things, civilisation asserts her superiority, and that the barbarians have found their masters in the elegant art of vituperation. THOMAS DE QUINCEY, English *litterateur*, may safely be backed for that polite accomplishment against Chinese Commissioner YEH, and "such cattle" as he calls the Mandarins.

But this by the way. Our object is simply to point out what seems to us an exceedingly striking illustration of that curious and very general psychological fact—that weakness of human nature satirised by the Scotch poet in the two lines which head these observations. DE QUINCEY is, of course, unconscious of the extent to which he disregards the monitory teaching of his favourite Greek drama, even while quoting it. He is, without doubt, serenely blind to the fact that in this pamphlet he appears the very embodiment of the spirit of outrage and arrogant self-assertion which that teaching warns us against. And we fear it is the truth, that this gentleman exhibits only an exaggeration of a spirit now rife among certain classes of the British people, and of a deplorable national weakness, which, most assuredly, as the old moralists teach, will some time find their avenging NEMESIS.

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